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JOHANN MOST---ANARCHIST AND PROPAGANDIST

A view of "direct action" Anarchism

by

Donald James Griffin
B.A., Montana State University, 1950

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Mas-
ter of Arts.

Montana State University

1951

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PREFACE

Anarchism, the belief that the social and economic ills of man may be cured by a diminution or destruction of the powers of the State, or of the State itself, was an indigenous movement in early nineteenth century America. Native Americans such as Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews while they may have been aware of the existence of men like Bakounin and the Russian Nihilist,¹ Nechayev, did not consciously adopt any of their philosophy.

Andrews and Warren actually stand out as "individualistic" Anarchists, as opposed to the "direct action" character of men like Johann Most, Alexander Berkman and August Spies. Both Warren and Andrews were willing to reform the State through political means or through the education of the "down-trodden". Theirs was a constructive rather than a destructive philosophy; they would replace the State with a better organization operating more for the common good.

It is only with the close of the Civil War in the United States that the "direct actionists" are noticeable in the Anarchist movement. The degree of restrictions placed upon the European Socialists following the German Revolution of 1848,² and the rise

1. For details on this group and in particular the action against Alexander II of Russia see John Footman, Red Prelude, (New Haven, 1945). Nechayev claimed this group as his personal possession.
2. For details on conditions which contributed to the Rhineland Revolution of 1848 see Oscar J. Hammen, "Social and Economic Factors in the Prussian Rhineland of 1848", American Historical Review, LIV, No. 4 (July 1949).

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL PICTURE

Josiah Warren, who has been called the "father of American Anarchy" was the son of a Revolutionary War General, Joseph Warren. Born in Boston in 1798, his early life is lost in obscurity. At twenty he married and moved to Cincinnati, where he patented a new type of lamp and devoted himself to its manufacture. In 1824 Robert Owen spoke in Cincinnati and for Warren it was the opening of wider vistas. He sold the lamp factory and moved his family to New Harmony.¹

While some of the finest minds of the time were at New Harmony, the contribution to Warren's later Anarchistic philosophy seems to have been negligible.² Charles Lesseur, the ichthyologist; William MacClure the geologist; Pestalozzi's aide, Joseph Neef; Gerald Treost, the mineralogist seem to have added to his knowledge of the universe but appear to have made no deep impression upon his political thinking.

The failure of New Harmony does not seem to have embittered Warren, but rather it appears to have turned him more toward Anarchism. He was convinced that the "emancipation of man" was only a question of making social adjustments through true

1. William Bailie, Josiah Warren, The First American Anarchist (Boston, 1906) 5-11. Bailie has made an earnest attempt to capture the spirit of Warren, the man, as well as Warren, the Anarchist.

2. For the population of New Harmony and the variety of their backgrounds see, Rowland Hill Harvey, Robert Owen, Social Idealist, (Berkeley, 1949) 108-161.

of factory labor in the United States may be cited as contributing causes to this plea for action.

Following the Rhineland Revolution of 1848 the emigration of Germans to the United States rose steadily upward to a peak in the period of 1870-1880.³ With this German immigration came a flow of Socialist ideas and men with a background of persecution for liberal action. America had been viewed as the "Workers Paradise" by many of these men and the shock of conditions that were only slightly improved and in some cases worse, in comparison with their native land, swung many of them to Anarchism. Crowded together in cities where the supply of labor was steadily increasing, wages were being reduced and unemployment was a constant threat, they found that political action was unavailing. The depressed conditions of the 1880's also may be cited as a factor, for periodic unemployment was a common thing in the shops of Chicago, Pittsburgh and New York at this time.⁴

The Civil War with its demand for war production had produced a demand for labor---mass labor, and this spelled disaster for the small craftsman of the pre-Civil War period. He now became a cog in a mass producing plant and as the tide of immigration rose to the Niagara of the 1880's he became more and more insecure. While this influx of population continued the worker faced, in

3. For figures on the immigration of the period see Isaac J. Hourwich, Immigration and Labor (New York, 1912). "From a million of Socialist and Anarchist agitation came the immigrants to the United States". Ibid, 191.

4. John R. Commons, et al, History of Labour in the United States (New York, 1913) II, 374.

principles.³ He attempted to place these "true principles" in operation with the foundation of his "Time Store" in Cincinnati in 1827.⁴ The "Time Store" was based upon the labor theory of value--the only true basis of wealth and currency is labor--and Warren interpreted labor as being mental, manual or menial.⁵ The most repugnant labor was worth the most and a system of currency was worked out which allowed for both the time spent on the task and the disagreeability of the task. Basically an attempt to break the power of the merchant-capitalist controlled exchange in Cincinnati, the "Time Store" collapsed in 1829 due to a lack of patronage and "the want of common honesty".⁶

Several colonies were established by Warren following the decline of the "Time Store", the most enduring of which was the "Modern Times" at Brentwood, Long Island, which was established in 1830. In the Brentwood project the use of labor notes was prominent, but the colony foundered on the rocks of inadequate capital.⁷

The confusion that existed in the minds of those who called themselves Anarchist at this point in American History is well illustrated by the conflict between the two works of Warren--Practical Details in Equitable Commerce and True Civilization.

3. Josiah Warren, Practical Details in Equitable Commerce, (New York, 1832) 14-15.

4. John Humphrey Noyes, History of American Socialism, (Philadelphia, 1870) 95.

5. Josiah Warren, True Civilization, (Boston, 1863) 62.

6. Noyes, History of Socialism, 97.

7. Ibid, 99-100.

many areas, worsening social conditions. Housing was bad, even at the time of the Homestead strike of 1892 and it had by no means descended from a high plane.⁵ Education was weighed against the economic gain for the family and in all too many cases was found wanting. The twelve hour day was by no means uncommon.⁶ Although a general movement toward an eight hour day was started in the early 1890's it had met with indifferent success even before the Haymarket Affair spelled its doom.

With this background of social and economic conditions came the plea for "attentats" (attempts on the lives of political or economic rulers for political gain)⁷ and as political action became less and less fruitful the plea became louder and louder. It finally reached a climax with the publication of Most's Revolutionnaire Kriegswissenschaft (Revolutionary War Science) in New York, in 1894. Here was the plan, all that it needed was implementation.

5. In this connection note the press reaction to social conditions in Pittsburgh at the time of the strike. New York Times, July 6, 1892, for example. See also Labor Department, State of Illinois, Second Biennial Report, "Strikes in Chicago and Vicinity", (Chicago 1896).

6. See for example, Harry J. Carman, Henry David and Paul W. Guthrie (eds.) The Path I Trod, (New York, 1940); the biography (from his letters and notes) of T. V. Powderly, leader of the Knights of Labor.

7. In this category may be grouped the attempt on the life of the Emperor of Germany by Hodel and Nobiling; Berlioz's attack on Frick; Czolgosz's assassination of McKinley; the bombing of Alexander II, by the Nihilists, and the killing of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914. See, Chapter II, Section A; Chapter III; Footman, Ibid and Sidney H. Fay, Origins of The World War, II, (New York, 1948) 77, who calls the assassins "immature half-baked students".

In the former work Warren argued for the negation of the government by saying that:

"There should be no such thing as the body politic--no member of any body, except that of the human family. Every man should be his own government, his own church, a system within himself."⁸

and then followed that in True Civilization with a plea for the establishment of government by expert. Warren would have a Deliberative Council selected for its knowledge and skill rather than for its political astuteness. The Council would discuss only one question at a time and would then publish a decision giving their reasons for such decision. The Council was to decide such questions as the amount of payment for medical services and the price of coal. The point of negation of government in this latter argument is in the lack of taxation and the absence of any army or navy and the reliance on a completely voluntary militia.⁹

The confusion between the practice of Warren and the writing of Warren--the former arguing for government even while denying it, and the latter a practice of the no-government idea of voluntary association--was typical of its day. There had been no political deeds of the character that were to rock the governments of Germany, Italy, and Russia in the period of 1870-1880. There had been no act nor law to unify the Anarchist movement in one concrete body. It is not surprising then that each of the Anarchist of this period tended to interpret and de-

8. Warren, Practical Details, 75.

9. Warren, True Civilization, 110.

fine Anarchy in his own fashion.

"Modern Times" was Warren's last experiment in colonization. It is his experiments in colonization and his war with the middle-man--as exemplified by his "Time Store"--which stand out as his contributions to the development of American Anarchism.¹⁰ One more credit may be assigned to Warren however, and that is the conversion of Stephen Pearl Andrews to the philosophy of Anarchy.

Andrews, another Massachusetts native, was born in Templeton in 1812. Becoming interested in Abolitionism he worked out a plan of manumission by purchase by the government. In 1839 he went to Houston, Texas to practice law, only to tear down his practice by his position on the slavery question. He left Houston, just ahead of a mob, and went to England where he tried to raise money for manumission through Lord Palmerston. This project came to naught with the interference of the Texas charge de affaires, Asheel Smith. Returning to the United States, in 1846, he developed an interest in shorthand and opened a school in Boston.¹¹ It was while operating this school that Andrews came into contact with Warren.¹²

10. Some credit may be given to "the father of American Anarchy" in this respect. The "Time Store" did induce imitation. Among them was a Boston "House of Equity" set up by a Mr. Keith, where merchandise was sold at cost. Another store was established in Philadelphia in the same year, 1855. Bailie, op cit, 92-94.

11. J. A. Trowbridge, "A Reminiscence of the Pantarch", The Independent, Vol. IV, No. 7 (February 26, 1903) pp. 497-501. Virtually the only article dealing with Andrews that the present author could find.

12. Stephen Pearl Andrews, The Science of Society, (Boston, 1888) 1-iii.

Warren's philosophy--the first attempt to set Anarchism into a social philosophy--is found in the Science of Society. A continuation of Warren's theory of "sovereignty of the individual" he defines it by stating that

"The only law is the Sovereignty of the Individual which gives every man absolute control over himself limited only by the onerous consequences of his actions".¹³

Andrews found that the present government violated this law of sovereignty by slavery, restrictions on commerce, and the restrictions on marriage. Advocating free trade, free land, he disapproved of capital punishment, taxation and military force. The best government is that government which does not govern at all. Therefore

"The true constitution of government is self government."¹⁴

and

"Genuine Democracy is identical with the no-government doctrine."¹⁵

For as all men are born free and equal, then every man is free from the government control of every other man.

Andrews argued for the replacement of government with corporations, for most of the governmental business could be handled more effeciently by private individuals, self-selected and self-authorized. Government was, in a sense, to be dissolved into the economic organism.

13. Ibid, 15.

14. Ibid, 30.

15. Ibid, 23.

Economically Andrews's theory was mainly concerned with labor and currency reforms. Operating on Warren's theory of value, the labor theory, he proposed the adoption of a labor note for situations where direct exchange of labor was not feasible. This would eliminate banking and minting, and "make every man his own banker." Money therefore would come to mean exactly what the possessor could produce. Land would be of value only in terms of the improvements made by the individual and calculated on a labor basis.¹⁶

The influence of Andrews upon the source of strength for such a program may be calculated by his experiences as a delegate to the Industrial Congress of Workingmen in New York in 1881. Representing the Fifth Ward Reformers of Boston, Andrews attempted to introduce his "Declaration of Fundamental Truths", a synthesis of his philosophy. Each time Andrews rose to introduce the "Declaration" the meeting was adjourned or discussion otherwise postponed. Finally (in desperation?) a committee was appointed to investigate the "Declaration" but since another committee had already reported very favorably on the proposals of Edward Kellogg, an exponent of the doctrine of Greenbackism, the result of Andrews committee was a foregone conclusion. The committee never reported back to the central body.¹⁷

Andrews, following his failure at the Industrial Congress

16. Ibid, pp. 29, 53-54, 71, 76.

17. John R. Commons, et al, History of Labour in the United States, (I-IV) (New York, 1918), 56. Kellogg's doctrines did not receive public acceptance until fifteen years later, however.

of Workingmen turned again to his school and emerged only at rare intervals to engage in discussion with Horace Greeley and Henry James. During the years immediately preceeding and immediately following the Civil War he again retired to his principal concern--philosophy. In 1872 his book The Basic Outline of Universology an "outline of a curious system of philosophy" appeared.¹⁸ In 1869 Andrews joined, but apparently took no active part in, a political organization entitled "The New Democracy"--an organization dating back to 1850. In that year William West had set down the platform of social reform which served as the base for the new organization.¹⁹

The "New Democracy" attempted to get the National Labor Union to adopt its platform but was unsuccessful, and in 1869 affiliated with the International Workingmen's Association then using as its headquarters, London. Andrews drew up the address to the International in London which stated that the National Labor Union was twenty years behind the times and that the "New Democracy" was the only organization capable of handling the changed American labor situation. From this "New Democracy" emerged the two sections of the International--sections nine and twelve--in 1871.²⁰

18. Trowbridge, "Reminiscence", 499. One of the subjects discussed by James, Greeley and Andrews was entitled "Love Marriage and Divorce." This was later reprinted in pamphlet form, but is now virtually extinct.

19. Commons, II, 211.

20. Ibid, II, 210.

With the entrance of the International American Anarchy received new impetus. The prime figure in the International Workingmen's Association in the United States was its secretary, Friedrich A. Sorge, a participant in the Rhineland Revolution in 1848.²¹ Sorge, who by no means could be called an Anarchist despite his revolutionary background in Germany, aided the cause of Anarchy by maintaining the Workingmen's Association as a movement and this proved to be a means of transition from the Individualism of Andrews and Warren to the direct action of the later German emigrants.

Sorge led an eventful life before coming to America in 1851. He had been born in Germany in 1828 and as a youth had taken part in the Rhineland Revolution. Escaping to Switzerland following the failure of the Revolt,²² he was interned at Freiburg for a year. Leaving Switzerland he managed to remain free and relatively secure in France until 1851, when a death sentence was imposed upon him, in absentia, by a German court at Torgenu, and the French government requested that he leave France.²³ He first went to England, and then took ship from London for what

21. There is unfortunately no biography of Sorge as a separate and complete work. A thumbnail sketch appears in Commons, II, 210, and the work of Morris Hillquit, History of American Socialism (New York, 1906), is disappointingly sketchy as regards Sorge.

22. Commons, II, 207.

23. Gustav Koerner, Memoirs of Gustav Koerner, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1909) 158. Koerner was acquainted with Sorge in Germany during his youth and later renewed the contact when he arrived in the United States.

he thought to be Australia, but which turned out to be New York. In 1868 he joined the German Communist Club and by 1869 he was a member of the executive committee for the Union for German Freedom and Unity.²⁴

Through the affiliation of the German Communist Club with the International in October 1867 Sorge became a member of the latter organization. Sorge participated in a short-lived Social Party of New York, but by 1869 the results of this were of such poor proportions that the Social Party reorganized itself and became a part of the National Labor Union. Under its new title the organization was known as Union 5 of the National Labor Union, while it was section 1 of the International.²⁵

In 1870 Sorge was selected as a delegate to the National Labor Union convention and was successful in having the Union pass a resolution favoring an affiliation with the International. The International was growing. In 1870 several other sections were formed, among them a French section and a Bohemian section.

Meantime the International had fallen heir to two of the most publicized women in the United States at this time. Tennessee Claflin and her sister Victoria Woodhull. Section 12 which contained the Woodhull-Claflin sisters had the advantage of a medium of communication in the "Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly"

24. Commons, II, 207. This organization was formed, apparently, by the emigres from Germany, following the Revolution of 1848.

25. Ibid. Although various causes are ascribed to this dual membership, the most logical seems to be that Sorge as the major influence in the Social Party recognizing the weakness of the organization felt that it would gain strength and perhaps membership, from both units.

to disseminate their ideas. Sorge denounced the Section when it started to interpret the International in it's own terms, rather than that of the Provisional Central Committee, of which Sorge was Secretary. When the "Weekly" issued a "manifesto" without the authority or consent of the Provisional Central Committee, Sorge complained to the London headquarters of the International.

The "manifesto" of Section 12 was mainly a plea for action on the causes of woman suffrage, freedom of sexual relations, universal language and the "pantarchy" of Stephen Pearl Andrews. The dispute between Sorge and Section 12 was quickly picked up by the newspapers and the public notice soon induced a further rupture in the already strained relations between the two groups. Both appealed to the General Council in London to be appointed the leading section of the International in America. The General Council sided with Sorge and Section 1.²⁶

But the break was not final enough for Sorge. In November 1871, delegates from fourteen sections (but without representation from Section 12) met and dissolved the Central Committee, and immediately re-formed as a Provisional Federal Council with the constitution remaining the same.

Meantime forces were at work in Europe which were to make a deep impression upon the International in the United States. In 1869 Bakounin had captured the International Congress at

26. Ibid. Marx even then must have been conscious that he could only deal with one dissident group at a time, and the Bakunin deviation was becoming more and more apparent at this time.

Basle, from the disciples of Marxian Socialism, with a program of revolution. Despite a determined and desperate effort to swing the Congress back to the consideration of legislative cures for the ills of mankind by Rittinghausen a delegate from Germany, the Congress became a victory for Bakounin and direct action. Bakounin also achieved a secondary victory, though a negative one, in the number of votes garnered for his proposition for the abolition of the right of inheritance.²⁷

The Congress swung more to the Anarchistic philosophy of Bakounin and away from the Socialism of Marx. In the words of one delegate, "Marx will be terribly annoyed." Having crossed swords with Bakounin a year before, and having at that time received from him an address of undying friendship, Marx was beyond doubt "annoyed"; particularly when he reflected that a scant twelve months before Bakounin had proclaimed himself a "disciple" of Marx.²⁸

The two men began a series of quasi-public attacks upon each other through the publications of the movement. By 1871 the feud flared into the open with Bakounin attacking Marx and all Socialists²⁹ and Marx replying through the medium of the

27. His proposition received thirty-two votes against twenty-three for an opposing proposition, but since thirteen delegates did not vote the necessary two-thirds majority was lacking. Robert Hunter, Violence and the Labor Movement (New York, 1914), 168.

28. Bakounin proclaimed this "devotion" in December of 1868. The Congress of Basle opened in September of 1869. Hunter, 161.

29. Among them Bebel and Liebknecht of Germany. Hunter, 172.

General Council in London. Bakounin attacked the State which Marx claimed would have to institute the economic reforms which he was advocating. Bakounin would destroy the State which Marx would use as the agency for reformation.

The Franco-Prussian War prevented another gathering of the International until 1872. Meantime Bakounin had participated in an abortive insurrection at Lyons, France and was suffering from the stigma of that failure when the Congress opened at the Hague in September, 1872.

The resolution to expel Bakounin was preceded by a long debate upon the entire history of Bakounin and his program. At the conclusion of this debate a vote was taken to expel Bakounin from the International and resulted in a twenty-seven to six victory for the Marxist forces.³⁰ Among the twenty-seven was the vote of Friedrich A. Sorge representing the North American International movement.³¹

The expulsion of Bakounin, important as it may have been, was not the only action taken by the Hague Congress. The Congress also voted to shift the seat of the General Council from London to New York.³² Whether Marx felt that in order to save the International from the Anarchists or whether he envisaged this as a mere temporary holding action is not clear.

Although victorious the Marxists had virtually destroyed

30. Hunter, 190-191.

31. Commons, II, 214. The fact that this was not two-thirds of the delegates did not seem to deter Marx.

32. Hunter, op cit.

the International as a working organization. In America some sections resenting the dominant position of Section 1 which held most of the administrative offices and the attitude of Sorge toward the sympathizers of Bakounin, gradually fell away or were expelled by Sorge. This internecine warfare continued until 1875 when Sorge angered by the actions of Conrad Carl with respect to the organ of the International--the Arbeiter-Zeitung--hired Wilhelm Liebknecht to send articles to the paper from Germany. Carl retaliated and was named as defendant in a suit instigated by Sorge against him for unlawfully seizing the paper. The paper was forced to suspend publication for two months following the suit and at the end of this period the International was almost non-existent as a cohesive group. The International emerged again as the "Workmen's Party of the United States" in 1876 and during the railroad strike of 1877 showed a philosophy more anarchistic than its predecessor.³³

One of the local leaders of the "Party" and certainly one of its more able speakers, Christopher Hesse, spoke for the use of "direct action" by the workers. Declaring that

"the present movement (the railroad strike of 1877) is a revolution and (it) offers an opportunity for the Internationalist to carry out their principles."³⁴

33. Commons, II, 215.

34. J. A. Dacus, Annals of the Great Strikes of 1877, (Chicago, 1877) 65. This is the only work on the strikes of 1877 which treats the strike as a separate item. Written in the year of the strikes it gives a good picture of public sentiment toward the strikers.

The strike was scarcely a week old when Hesse made this statement and as the strike lengthened his statements became more and more aligned with the principle of "direct action." On the 22nd of July when the strike was at its highest peak, Hesse called upon a meeting to

"rise and assert themselves, even though it should be necessary to deluge the streets of Baltimore with blood."³⁵

Despite his inflammatory statements Hesse was never a person of any consequence in the Anarchist movement. Following the strike of 1877 he moved to New York and there his career drops into obscurity.

In New York City the statements of leaders of the Party were no less inflammatory, but productive of more intelligent action. Justus Schwab addressing a meeting of the "Party" in the German Assembly Rooms on the Bowery declared that

"If anybody talks of a man with a family living on seventy cents a day he is a damned fool. Whoever says so I knock his brains out right away."³⁶

It was at this meeting that the letter to President Hayes was drafted censuring him for having allowed troops to be used against the workers and permitting himself to be employed as a "tool" of the railroad owners.³⁷

35. Dacus, 66-67. Emma Goldman, Living My Life (New York, 1934), a work that is virtually a Who's Who of American Anarchists during the period of 1897-1920 makes no mention of Hesse nor does any other work that the present writer has been able to uncover.

36. Dacus, 243.

37. There was some justification for this according to Dacus. Colonel Thomas Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, on whose lines the strike originally centered, wired President Hayes that "immediate attention" be given to the telegram of the Governor of West Virginia requesting Federal troops. The wire is reprinted in Dacus, 44-45.

The most active support of the strike in the "Party" was the German element. While Hesse and Schwab agitated in Baltimore and New York respectively, Paul Lofgren led the Executive Committee which virtually ran the city of St. Louis during the week of July 19-26, 1877.³⁸ August Spies encouraged the strike in Chicago by attempting a general strike movement among the factory workers.³⁹ The German section were active also in organizing relief for the families of the railroad strikers.⁴⁰

The revolutionist segment of the old International were temporarily at sea following the strike. While the moderate faction had found a home in the Socialists Labor Party, the revolutionists felt that this organization was too much of an advocate of political action.⁴¹ The rift between the two factions, temporarily healed by the common purpose of the strike, was even more widened by the action of the Chicago Socialists. This group had held a mass meeting in March of 1877 which urged the use of political action. The same year the Socialists of Chicago ran Albert R. Parsons for Alderman and encouraged by the proportion of the total vote secured, ran Parsons for Sheriff in

38. The Executive Committee was finally deposed by the Mayor and a group of irate citizens following the collapse of the strike. Ibid, 393-395.

39. August Spies, Autobiography, (Chicago 1887) 18. The attempt was a failure.

40. Following the meeting at which the letter to President Hayes was drafted, Schwab launched a contribution campaign to aid the striker's families. Dacus, 124.

41. The moderates did not leave en masse but rather as individuals. Commons, II, 283.

the election of 1878. Parsons was again defeated but the Chicago group had committed the cardinal sin in the eyes of the revolutionists--they had engaged in political action.⁴²

This action brought a further rift in the "Party" and resulted in the formation of the "Revolutionary Socialists" by Justus Schwab in New York. In 1881 Schwab joined with Joseph Hasselmann, a recent exile from Germany, in forming the "Social Revolutionary Club." In Chicago Spies and Parsons set up a similar movement and began organizing "clubs" in Chicago and throughout Illinois.⁴³ At the insistence of the Chicago "club" of Spies and Parsons a convention of all "Revolutionary Socialists" was called for October of 1881 in Chicago.⁴⁴

The convention revealed that political action was still uppermost in the minds of most of the members when George A. Schilling emerged as the "Revolutionary Socialists" candidate for Mayor of Chicago. This was supposed to be the last try for correction of the "wrongs done to the working man" by political action. An endorsement of the London Congress of the Working People's Association was approved and the convention declared itself in favor of

"societies which stand ready to render armed resistance to the encroachments upon the rights of the workingman."⁴⁵

42. Ibid., 272.

43. Lucy E. Parsons, Life of Albert R. Parsons, (Chicago, 1887) 20.

44. Commons, Ibid.

45. Ibid.

The convention christened the new "clubs" with the title of "Revolutionary Socialists" and Chicago was designated to set up an "Information Bureau" through which the various groups, all autonomous, were to have a connecting link.⁴⁶

The political action "last try" by the Revolutionary Socialists" of Chicago proved to be a disaster for Schilling, and the Chicago group now forsook political action as a means of righting the "wrongs against the worker." As a result of this entrance into the political arena the New York group refused to recognize the Information Bureau. Another convention was indicated in order to remedy this and other defects and to achieve a working unity. A vote of the various groups throughout the nation indicated a preference for a convention to be held in Pittsburgh in 1883.⁴⁷

46. Ibid. The Information Bureau had not been established when the protests of the New York group were being heard.

47. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

Section A

THE PRELUDE

The New York section of the Anarchist movement was being surpassed by the Chicago group in 1882. The New York group could hope to recapture its earlier prestige in the movement only by bringing to the fore a dynamic leader above the caliber of Spies and Parsons. The Social Revolutionary Club of New York had no such man, but it knew of one--Johann Most. Schwab had known him in Germany and had been aware of his activities in England, and in him Schwab felt was the answer to the problem. In October of 1882 the Club, at the instigation of Schwab, extended to Most an invitation to come to the United States. Just released from prison, he readily consented after arrangements were made to publish his paper, Freiheit, in New York.¹

For the Social Revolutionary Club, Most was no small acquisition. A brilliant speaker; an able editor and publisher; a martyr to the "cause" and a recognized leader among the German element, he was certain to increase the membership of that club. There was but one drawback to this acquisition. Most had been associated with Bakunin in the minds of many of the members of the International, and they, conceivably, be inclined to associate

1. Hilliquit, 224. Schwab handled the publication of Freiheit in New York pending Most's arrival, and included in it several articles that Most sent from London. See also Henry David, History of the Haymarket Affair, (New York, 1936), 85.

him with disruption, rather than with leadership.²

Most experienced an unhappy early life. His mother, whom he later claimed to be "the one good influence in my life of torture" died in the cholera epidemic which swept Augsburg, Germany in 1856. His father, a minor German civil servant, remarried and brought home to the ten-year old Johann, a step-mother whom he came to hate.³ The great tragedy of his life - the poisoning of his right jaw - occurred in 1859 and necessitated the removal of several inches of his lower right jaw-bone. This left the youth with a twisted face which he carried to the grave.⁴

Most early demonstrated a proclivity for rebellion. In his twelfth year he led a strike against a "tyrannical school-master" and was expelled from school. Any hope that the father may have had of seeing his son becoming a "member of the educated and respected classes" was forsaken following this turn of events. Young Most was apprenticed to a bookbinder and found that he had "merely exchanged one hell for another". The step-mother, he later complained, had made life a "virtual purgatory" at home, and the workers in the shop, did not hesitate to make jokes at the expense of the boy with the twisted face.

2. For the account of the feud which split the First International see Chapter I, and also, J. W. Postgate The First International (New York, 1912).

3. Johann Most, Memoiren, Erlebtes, Erforschtes und Erdachtes (In Four Parts) (New York, 1903), Memoiren, 9, 14, 18.

4. The engraving of Most published at the time of his death in the Cincinnati Enquirer shows that the deformity was still there, and the story that accompanies the engraving mentions the deformity in connection with a speech, a year earlier, in New York. Cincinnati Enquirer, March 19, 1906.

Most had an early desire to go on the stage. In discussing a future with his father, following his school rebellion, he expressed a desire for a theatrical career. Augsburg of the later 1850's did not regard the theatre very highly and his father was inclined to go along with the general town sentiment. As an apprentice bookbinder Most saved every pfennig that he could lay hands on and invested it in theatre tickets. One of his greatest disappointments occurred when he applied for a job with a Shakespearean road company then touring Germany. When he asked for a part, the manager is said to have replied

"You are better suited for the part of a freak in the circus than the stage".⁵

The Wanderjahr--that year of working from town to town, then almost compulsory for the young journeyman in nineteenth century Germany--found him being refused work in shops on the grounds that he would frighten the manager's wife, scare little children and similar witticisms.⁶

Most left Germany in 1867 and emigrated to Switzerland where at Le Locle he found an employer who had little interest in the facial aspects of his workers. Here he settled down for

5. Most, Memoiren, 19. Some time before this incident of the theatrical application, Most had an experience with a priest which turned him violently against the Church. His mother had raised him without benefit of religious instruction ("she kept my young mind free from that taint of religious superstition", Goldman, 17). Consequently, in an area which was almost universally Catholic, Most did not appear at Church. The parish priest spied him on the street one day and forced him to kneel before him. Ibid.

6. Goldman, 64, recounting Most's version of the Wanderjahr.

a year of working and reading. A year that came to an abrupt end when he attended a Labor Festival held by a section of the International Working People's Association, at La Chaux du Fonds. He returned to Le Locle with the idea of entering into the class struggle on behalf of the International and plunged into the work with the zeal of a reformed sinner. The first step in this direction was to enter the German Worker's Society - a social group that embraced all the trades then existing in Le Locle. There he attempted to swing the organization in the direction of labor reform. His success in this undertaking may be judged by the fact that in three months the membership had increased four fold and Most was in the position of secretary.⁷

Most's activity on behalf of the German Worker's Society did not evoke any enthusiasm on the part of his employer and in 1868 Most was again in search of employment. He moved to Vienna and engaged in speaking for the International on the subjects of free speech, a free press, and freedom of assembly. This action resulted in the first of Most's imprisonments -- a sentence of one month for making an incendiary address. Undeterred by this he resumed activities immediately upon his release and was again before the courts, in 1870, for participation in a monster demonstration.⁸

7. Max (Podalsky) Mosad, Apostles of Revolution (Boston, 1939), 258-259.

8. Hillquit, 214. When the Court imposed this last sentence (of banishment) Most is said to have replied: "What makes Your Excellencies sure that the Empire will last for a hundred years, or for that matter, five more years". Most, Memoiren, (Part III), 68.

In 1871 Most was released, following a change in governmental policy, and banished from Austria-Hungary for a period of one hundred years and forced to return to Germany. He began the publishing of his paper Freiheit in Chemnitz, almost immediately after settling in that city.⁹ His paper and the radical utterances by Most soon caught both the eye and the ear of the authorities and, in late 1872, he was sentenced to Plötzensee prison for a year. Released in time for the election of 1874, he won a seat in the Reichstag as a delegate from the district of Chemnitz.¹⁰

He was re-elected in 1876, but held his seat only long enough to be banished from Germany following the attempted assassination of the Emperor.¹¹ Although he was not directly involved in the plot he fell within the category of persons "to be banished for the good of the State",¹² and was forced to leave Germany early in 1879.¹³ He now had a choice of two countries that offered relative peace to a political exile--England and Switzerland.

9. Hippolyte Havel, "Johann Most", Man, Vol. II, No. 1, (January 1934), 8. It was following this imprisonment that Most wrote a pamphlet on Plötzensee, deriding the so-called strictness of the prison and showing how he and other "politicals" had out-witted the guards so that they were able to live in relative comfort. Most was roundly denounced for this pamphlet by those who were still in the prison when it was published. Nomad, 261.

10. Havel, op cit.

11. Under the provisions of the so-called "Exceptional Laws". See Hourwich, op cit. Also banished with Most was William Hasselmann.

12. These are Most's words. Memoiren (Part III) 74. He is undoubtedly paraphrasing the decree of some official in this connection.

13. Ibid. Most does not give the date but it would seem to be in January, 1879.

He arrived in London and immediately set up his beloved Freiheit as a weekly publication to serve the German workers of the English capital.¹⁴ In his first year in London, Most devoted himself to capturing the leadership of the Social Democrat Workmen's Club, then an organization of a thousand members. By late 1890, he was in full control of the Club,¹⁵ a fact that may have had some bearing on the actions of the Social Democrats in their Congress at Wyden in the same year.

The Social Democrats were forced to convene in Switzerland following the outlawing of the organization in Germany. The Congress expelled Most for "pursuing the bungling course of the revolutionary".¹⁶ He had written from London, being unable to attend the Congress, or possibly foreseeing its result, that "all measures are legal against tyrants".¹⁷ The motion for expulsion

14. E. V. Zenker, Anarchism, (New York, 1897) 280.

15. Havel, loc cit.

16. David, 86.

17. Ibid. Zenker has Most present in Switzerland prior to this Congress, and also places Most in prison twice in England "once for sixteen months and another time for eighteen months". Zenker, 297. Accepting the date that Zenker gives for the arrival of Most in England, January, 1879, and adding these two sentences together (a total of thirty-four months, which allows for no time lag between arrest and trial) and then comparing them with his date of arrival in America, December 11, 1882, it is difficult to see how Most could have accomplished what Zenker claims. Zenker states he captured the Social Democrat Workmen's Club; been active in Switzerland; ran Freiheit, and fought two legal battles all in the space of forty-seven months, not deducting the thirty-four months spent in prison that Zenker claims. Zenker, 297. Further Zenker states that following his (second ?) conviction it was impossible to print Freiheit in London, for "no printer could be found to set up the type for Freedom (English translation of Freiheit)!! Ibid. This would have bothered Most not at all, for he had set type

lacked complete unanimity by only two votes.¹⁸ Also expelled from the Social Democratic Party at this Congress was William Hasselmann, the former Reichstag associate of Most who had written from America urging

"an immediate revolution (in Germany) which although it might not prove successful would, nevertheless, be good propaganda."¹⁹

Most and Hasselmann were roundly condemned by one member for "exercising an evil influence on many of the members".²⁰ Another delegate urged that all good German Socialists would turn away from such men who "would only bring grief to those with whom they came into contact".²¹

The majority of the members of the London Social Democrat Workmen's Club did not approve of the action of the Congress

17. (continued) for his paper in Chemnitz. Rudolf Rucker, Johann Most, das Leben eines Rebellen, (Berlin, 1924), III; also Goldman, CC. Zenker also has "a strong following which, as early as October (1890), felt itself strong enough to hold on the Lake of Geneva, a sort of opposition to the one at Wyden, in order to declare its decisions null and void". Ibid. "In Germany, a radical group led by the agitator Most always an extremist, and Hasselmann". Ibid. Most, by his own admission, was in no sense a leader of any movement, group or party in Germany. Most followed Reinsdorf, whom he regarded as "my teacher, my political father". Most, Memoiren, (Part III), 110. The final injury done to history is the continual misspelling of Peukert's name which Zenker insists on calling "Penkert". Zenker, 280. See also Goldman, 296. The Public Record Office in London reports only one trial of Most, during his stay in England.

18. David, op cit.

19. Nomad, 264.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid. This is probably an attempt to influence Johann Neve to leave the "evil influence" of Most. See Chapter III.

at Wyden, and continued to follow Most.²² He continued to preach what the Congress had termed "terrorism" in Freiheit which had now shifted from what had been hitherto viewed as mere "Socialist agitation" to openly calling itself an "Anarchist organ".²³ This new attitude on the part of Freiheit was to bring Most before the courts again.

On the 26th of May he found himself before the Central Criminal Court of London, Lord Coleridge presiding, indicted with twelve counts of violation of the Statutes 24 and 25 Victoria. The major points in the indictment charged:

1. Justification of murder and incitement to murder.
2. Disturbing the peace and friendship, then existing between the Queen and other sovereigns of Europe.
3. Encouragement of murder by certain persons, unknown to the Court, to murder certain other persons (the rulers of Europe).
5. Encouragement of certain named persons to murder certain other persons, to wit, the sovereigns and rulers of the Europe.
7. Encouragement of certain persons, whose names to the jurors were unknown, alleged to be persons, who, on the day of publication (the 19th day of March, 1881) of the libel were subscribers to the paper called Freiheit.
9. Encouragement of certain other persons, whose names to the jurors were unknown, to murder certain other persons, to wit, His Imperial Majesty, Alexander III, Emperor of all the Russias.²⁴

22. "Regina v Most", In the High Court of Justice, Court for the Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved, (London, 1878-1881), Public Record Office, (Photostatic Copy) London, 1881.

23. Ibid. Most would seem to be at sea, ideologically, in the earlier portion of his stay in England.

24. Ibid.

The 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th counts were respectively similar to the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th, except that the charge was of "endeavoring to persuade" instead of "encouraging". The 11th and 12th counts were similar to the 9th and 10th, respectively, except that the name of the "Emperor of Germany" was substituted for that of the name of the "Emperor of all the Russias."²⁵

The material which gave issue to this indictment and trial of Most was an editorial published in Freiheit, in London on March 19, 1901 following the assassination of Alexander II, in St. Petersburg, Russia. The editorial, in part, reads:

"Like a thunderclap it penetrated into those princely palaces where dwelt those crime beladen abortions of every profligacy, who long since have earned a similar fate, a thousand fold... ..

"May, just in the most recent times they whispered, with gratification, in each others ears that all danger was passed because the most energetic of tyrant haters, the Russian Nihilists had been successfully terminated to the last member....

"Then comes such a hit... (The assassination of Alexander II). May the bold deed which, we repeat it, has our full sympathy, inspire revolutionists far and wide with fresh courage."²⁶

Although the Court supplied Most with one of the ablest attorneys in England at the time, A. M. Sullivan, he was convicted. Sullivan, in arguing the case before the Court for Reserved Cases, made the appeal that "the article contained no proposal to a defined person to murder a define person".²⁷ The

25. Ibid. His main reliance is placed on a revolution in Germany, at this time.

26. Ibid. For details on the actual assassination of Alexander II, see Footman, op cit.

27. J. R. Bulwer, Q.C., ed., The Law Reports, Supreme Court of Judicature Queen's Bench Division, Court of Appeals and Crown Cases Reserved, (London, 1880-1881) VII, 249.

Court however held otherwise and Most was sentenced to sixteen months at Clerkenwell Prison, though the statute held that this offense was punishable by two years imprisonment.²⁸

Most revealed his attitude toward the English judicial system and this particular trial when he contrasted it with his later trials in the United States by saying:

"There is a great difference in the system of the two countries. In England you are tried in the Courts---here (the United States) you are tried in the newspapers before you ever get to Court."²⁹

From such a background of "martyrdom" came the man who was to raise the issue of Anarchy from a mere theoretical basis to one of dynamic action. The Social Revolutionary Club had invited a speaker and they were to get a catalyst of the highest magnitude.

28. Ibid.

29. Goldman, 74.

Section B

ARSON?

When Most stepped from the Wisconsin to the docks of New York, on December 11, 1882, he was greeted by Justus Schwab and "about thirty other Socialists".¹ The next night he was guest of honor at a huge reception at Cooper Union Institute where his opening address was accorded great applause.² Most indulged in his usual refrain against the domination of the "capitalistic classes", even to the point of calling up some of the phrases which had marked his speeches in London.³

An interval of a few weeks followed during which time Most became acclimated to the weather of the class conflict in the United States.⁴ He learned fast and in Baltimore on February 11, 1883, he opened his lecture tour of the country. Always at his best before a group of laborers he gave a prime example of his histrionic ability in this address.

1. New York Times, December 12, 1882.
2. Times, December 14, 1882. Victor Drury introduced Most at this gathering.
3. Goldman, 61, recounting Justus Schwab's version of the reception.
4. David, 87, quotes a New York Herald Tribune account of December 19, 1882 which states that Most left for Chicago two days after his arrival in New York. There is no record of any public utterance of Most in Chicago papers of December, 1882, nor does any other source bear out the Herald Tribune account. Most was not in good health at the time of his arrival; the Freiheit was a mere infant immigrant; he spoke English haltingly and he certainly needed some knowledge of the class struggle in America before embarking on this tour. See Rocker, 144.

"It was cold rainy cheerless day and the sidewalks were covered with a melting snow, so as to make it extremely unpleasant to venture out of doors. But Most had a hall full of eager listeners. He told the laborers that he had little hope of overthrowing their oppressors by means of the ballot. He believed that their emancipation would be brought about by violence, as all great reforms in the past had been. He said that a musket was a good thing to have. If it was not needed now, it could be placed in a corner and it occupied but little space. The presiding officer, in closing the meeting, emphasized this part of Most's speech particularly. He told the laborers that a piece of paper would never make them free, that a musket was worth a hundred votes and closed with the lines

'Mur pulver und Bloi!

Die machen uns frei! (Lead and powder alone can make us free!)

There is no doubt that a considerable portion of his audience sympathized with his views. They listened approvingly and applauded his most fierce remarks loudly".⁵

The tour bore fruit in the conversion of some of the dissident Socialists to the Social Revolutionary movement.⁶ Several cities reported the existence of "groups".⁷ But the benefits were not all one-sided, for Most, also, gained from the tour. He was richer in the knowledge of the character of the American neo-Anarchist and he had further gained in the awareness of the peculiar conditions in such diverse and scattered localities as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh Philadelphia and Paterson, New Jersey.⁸

5. Richard T. Ely, French and German Socialism, (New York, 1903), 27.

6. Billquit, 216.

7. Ibid. Among them Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, Omaha, Louisville, and Columbus, Ohio.

8. It is somewhat doubtful as to that actual "Anarchism" of the movement at this time, but after the Pittsburgh Congress it becomes more apparent.

The lecture tour of 1883 was not Most's only contribution to the "cause". Freiheit, by March of that year, achieved the status of a daily paper and was using as its motto the cry that its editor had sent to the Social Democrats at Wyden: "All measures are legal against tyrants".⁹

Late in the spring of 1883, he returned to New York for closer editing of Freiheit and to prepare for the coming "Congress of the Revolutionary Socialists of North America", to be held in Pittsburgh on October 14th.¹⁰ He was engaged most of the summer in the preparation of a platform that he hoped that the Congress would adopt.

This Congress was called partly to clear up the old difficulties between the Chicago and New York groups and partly as the result of the Paul Grottkau and August Spies tour of the nation in the summer of 1887. Following the conclusion of the tour these two members of the Chicago group reported that there was a large demand for such a Congress.¹¹ In accordance with this report Spies, as head of the Information Bureau had sent out a circular "To the Socialists of North America" in August of 1883, declaring that

"The Socialists seem to be the only party that are cognizant of their mission. Let all those who have the cause of the oppressed classes at heart and who are sincere about it, meet in counsel and agree upon a uniform, practical and effective organization

9. David, op cit.

10. The actual date of Most's return to New York is unknown, but he was editing Freiheit personally on May 3, 1883. David, 83.

11. Spies, Autobiography, 23.

and agitation."¹²

This "meeting in counsel" opened on the scheduled date and the influence of Most was immediately apparent. Of the twenty-six men representing as many localities in eleven states, fourteen came from cities in which Most had spoken in the earlier part of the year.¹³

Most dominated the meeting both by virtue of his fiery oratory and the fact that the intellectual make-up of the group was not in proportion to its numbers. Besides Most, the only men of real proven ability in the movement were Albert R. Parsons and August Spies, both representing groups in Chicago.¹⁴

The work of the Congress is best summarized in the so-called "Pittsburgh Manifesto", which, after opening with a passage from the Declaration of Independence goes on to state the "wrongs" of the workers.

"the propertyless are forever debarred from entering the ranks of the poerties....
the system which reduces a constantly growing portion of the working class to poverty and consequently to crime is unjust, insane and murderous...
the worker can free himself (from his chains) by organization for rebellion...
the International Working People's Association presents itself as a self-evident necessity....
the organization of society formed over the ruins of the capitalistic state should be based upon the socialized economic life...
the most serious obstacle (to the establishment of the state referred to in the preceding line) is the State, which is a product of capitalism

12. David, 90.

13. Hillquit, 220.

14. Hold, op cit. See also Commons, II, 293. Parsons represented the English speaking group and Spies the German group.

and which has no other purpose than the upholding of the present order...

Law, the school, and the Church likewise serve no other interests but those of the capitalist class, insuring its dominance..

In his struggle (against the existing system) the worker has no other resources but his own efforts."¹⁵

To remedy these conditions the Manifesto advocates:

- "1. Destruction of the existing class rule by all means.
2. Establishment of a free society based upon the cooperative organization of production.
3. Free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organizations without commerce and profit-mongery.
4. Organization of education on a secular scientific and equal basis for all sexes.
5. Equal rights for all without distinction of sex or race.
6. Regulation of all public affairs by free contracts between the autonomous communes and associations, resting on a federalistic basis."¹⁶

The Manifesto closes with an exhortation that might well have been written by Marx:

"Tremble oppressors of the world. Not far beyond your purblind sight there dawns the scarlet and sable lights of the JUDGEMENT DAY."¹⁷

Whether the Manifesto was actually written by Most is not clear. He is generally credited with it, due possibly to the degree of dominance he exercised at the Congress. There was however a committee appointed to draw up the document, composed of Most, Spice, Parsons, Victor Drury and Reiggraber.¹⁸ A comparison of the Manifesto with an article in Freiheit of October

15. Richard T. Ely, Labor Movement in America, (New York, 1896) pp. 358-363.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Drury was later to present a resolution to the Knights of Labor convention urging clemency upon the Governor of Illinois with respect to the Haymarket group. Powderly, 644-645; also Ely, Labor Movement in America, 312.

13, 1883, reveals the similarity between the two. This article entitled "Unser Grundsatz" (Our Fundamentals)¹⁹ in some sections, is almost an exact duplicate of the "Manifesto".

The Manifesto with all its fine phraseology, produced an immediate effect on the disorganized Socialist Labor Party. In December of 1883 some of the more prominent members of this Party addressed a proposal to the Chicago group advocating union of the two organizations.²⁰ The response, written by Spies, urged the Socialist Labor Party to dissolve itself into small groups and thereby better carry on the work of the "coming revolution".²¹ Spies may have hoped to see the assimilation of the small units by the Revolutionary Socialists, but, if this were his hope it was destined to remain unfulfilled.

During his early years in America, Most made some enemies. In the Socialist Labor Party convention of December, 1883, these enemies were presented with their golden opportunity. A resolution was introduced condemning Most and his methods. It failed of passage²² but it is significant in that it indicates the tenor of the feelings of some of the Socialist Labor Party toward the German born leader of Anarchy. The lack of a formal alliance between the Socialist Labor Party and the Revolutionary Socialists may be in part attributable to this distrust.

19. A translation is in Havel, loc cit.

20. Alexander Jonas, Henry Molkenbuhr and George Lehr initiated the correspondence with Spies. Hillquit, 218.

21. Ibid. See also Spies, 25.

22. Ely, Labor Movement in America, 229.

In spite of Most's violent oratory there had been no instance of "direct action" in America. While there had been violence in the strike of 1877, there had been no attentat comparable to the acts of Hodel and Nobiling against the Emperor Wilhelm.²³ There was no parallel in American History for the assassination of Alexander II by a discontented political group,²⁴ nor any act against a person of political importance by an American revolutionary group. One reason may have been the difference in membership of the radical parties in the United States and Europe.

This difference in membership is difficult to analyze. In Europe the membership of the radical parties had a high content of men with education; teachers, who in many cases propagandized with a better than average understanding of the forces at work.²⁵ There were chemists who possessed an understanding of the new explosives; technicians who could assemble instruments of destruction and others who were experts in allied fields. These crafts and professions united in Anarchy or any other radical movement were a potent force in any campaign which foresaw the need for violence.²⁶

23. See Chapter I, also Dacus, particularly Chapters II, IV, VII. The attempt by Hodel and Nobiling was unsuccessful in 1878, but it had resulted in the anti-Socialist laws of 1878 which, in turn, had resulted in Most's expulsion from Germany. Most, Memoiren, Part III, 71-74.

24. The Nihilists led by Zhelyabov. For details on this group and the three previous attempts that failed see Footman.

25. Hasselmann was a teacher, as was Joseph Peukert, Nomad, Apostles of Revolution, 234.

26. Ibid. Nomad points up this contrast in the composition of the two groups--American and European--but attributes it to the longer history of violence in Europe.

Despite Most's pleas for "direct action" the American Anarchist refused to forsake his traditional abhorrence of violence. Too few in number to lose themselves in the mass of the proletariat, the Anarchists were further handicapped by their lack of knowledge of the technique of explosives. Most felt it his responsibility to remedy this defect, by acquiring a mastery of this delicate art and then disseminating his "know-how" through the medium of Freiheit.

In early 1884 he took a job with a Jersey City dynamite factory cutting himself completely off from his comrades, and learning the process of production of explosives. The production of dynamite was, and is, a long and expensive process. It necessitates a laboratory and a location where unpleasant fumes will not attract suspicion if the production is to be carried on illegally. The Anarchists possessed neither of the two necessities. There was but one solution--find employment in an explosives factory and steal the quantity required.²⁷

The result of this year-long employment was Revolutionnaire Kriegswissenschaft (Revolutionary War Science) written in German, and designed for German consumption. Most, at this time, envisaged the German Socialist revolution as being on the immediate horizon and felt that this work would win him a place in that struggle. The work warned against the attempted manufacture of dynamite and the theft of explosives from factories which were already well-guarded. How then was the Anarchist to obtain dynamite?

²⁷. Rudolf Roeker, Johann Most das Leben eines Rebellen, (Berlin, 1924) 160.

The answer was "Tu Geld in Deinen Beutel" (put money in thy pocket) by taking it from the purse of another.²⁸ Most's answer to the charge that he was counselling robbery was the reiteration of his statement to the Social Democrats at Wyden "that all measures are legal against tyrants", and further that the "capitalists are robbing the workers". Despite this logic, the phrase "Tu Geld in Deinen Beutel" discredited the movement in many radical minds. The utter lack of morality implicit in Most's statements of individual expropriation turned many of the more respectable radicals away from the movement.²⁹

Nor was this the only reaction. Most included in his book a chapter on the use of inflammable liquids, and this was blamed for the increase in the fire rate in New York City.³⁰ Several men known to be associated with the movement were involved, in 1886, in what bears a strong suspicion of arson.³¹ Schwab broke with Most at the time of the exposure of these incidents by Benjamin R. Tucker in his journal, Liberty.³² When asked by the press for the reason for this severance of relations, Schwab is reported to have said that he believed that Most was "not a moral man".³³ Schwab had, just prior to this, barred Most and

28. Nomad, Apostles of Revolution, 286.

29. Benjamin R. Tucker who had been kindly disposed toward him prior to this, but now attacked him. See B. R. Tucker Instead of a Book, (New York, 1893) particularly, 432-434.

30. New York Sun, May 3, 1886.

31. Ibid. See also Tucker, 430.

32. Liberty, March 17, 1886. Reprinted in Tucker, op cit. The breach was never healed apparently. See the trial of Most in 1887, Chapter III.

33. Tucker, 433.

several men known to be connected with the fires from his saloon on Fifth Street.³⁴ The implication was not hard to grasp.

While no wave of violence shook the East as a result of Most's efforts, the Haymarket Riot has been attributed to his teachings.³⁵ The technique of violence and manufacture of weapons for the coming "revolution of the workers" had been learned too well by someone, prior to the 4th of May, 1886. As the chief apostle of a creed of violence it was inevitable that Most would be linked to this first act of "direct action".

34. Ibid, also New York Sun, May 22, 1886.

35. Notably the prosecutor of the Haymarket trial. See Chapter II, Section C.

Section C

THE MARTYRS

While Most had been educating himself in the "school for explosives", the Chicago section of the movement had been forging ahead still further. The movement in Chicago could now boast of an English daily newspaper, a German daily and two German weeklies plus a Bohemian weekly.¹ This growth in communication can be attributed largely to the influence of Albert R. Parsons and August Spies.² From this growth and strength of the Anarchist movement was to come the "martyrs" of the Chicago sections through the Haymarket Affair.

Parsons, a former Confederate soldier, had been a printer in his home city of Montgomery, Alabama, later an Assistant Assessor of Internal Revenue, in Texas in 1870.³ His first entrance upon the labor stage was with the "Relief Aid Society"

1. The English daily was the Alarm; the German daily, the Arbeiter-Zeitung; the German weeklies, the Verbote, and the Packel; the Bohemian daily, the Buodconost. The circulation of the Packel was the largest, in 1884, 10,055. Millquit, p. 191. It must be remembered that the Packel was first published in 1878, Ibid. The largest of the dailies was the Arbeiter-Zeitung with a circulation of 5,236, in 1884. There are no figures available for the Buodconost but in view of the population of Chicago, with a high content of German-born, it is reasonable to assume that it was less than either of the German publications.
2. Parsons edited the Alarm in 1884-1885-1886 until his arrest. Spies edited the Arbeiter-Zeitung from 1880 to 1886. Both were active speakers for the movement from 1883 onward until their arrest. Ibid.
3. Lucy E. Parsons, Life of Albert R. Parsons, (Chicago, 1887), 20.

formed to force an accounting of the funds collected for the poor following the fire of 1871.⁴ He joined the Workingmen's Party in 1876 and in the same year became a member of the Knights of Labor.⁵ Receiving the backing of the Socialists when he ran for alderman in 1877 he found their support little consolation following his defeat. He ran for Sheriff in 1878, and was again defeated. He declined the nomination for President offered him by the Socialist Labor Party at Allegheny City in 1879 on the grounds that he was ineligible due to age--he was then thirty-one--and closed his political career.⁶ From 1879 he was an opponent of political means to benefit the worker and insisted on more revolutionary action.⁷

In 1879 Parsons was selected as Secretary of the Chicago Eight Hour League and picked by this body to represent it at the Greenback Labor Party convention in Washington in 1880. The Chicago League had hopes of securing the support of the Greenbackers for the passage of the "Eight Hour Law".⁸ In 1882 he attended the convention of the Organized Trades and Labor Unions and was then becoming known as a mediator between the

4. Commons, II, 261.

5. Parsons, op cit.

6. David, 342.

7. His appearance at conventions hereafter were previous commitments, apparently, which he felt he could not dishonor. Parsons, 21.

8. Lemuel Danryid. History and Philosophy of the Eight Hour Movement, (Washington, 1899), 210.

trades-unionists and the strictly political factions within the Socialist Party.⁹

In late 1881 he attended the Congress of Revolutionary Socialists as a delegate from Chicago.¹⁰ The transition of Parsons from a moderate to a "revolutionary" Socialist had begun in 1879, and by 1883 it was complete. In that year Parsons was a delegate to the Pittsburgh convention from the English speaking Chicago Anarchists.¹¹ Directly after this meeting he was acknowledged as the leader of this section.¹²

Parsons lacked the fierceness of Most in his speaking but he more than made up for it in his writing. Witness the editorial in the Alarm of November 1, 1884 wherein Parsons stated that dynamite is the "great social emancipator" and goes on to relate that

"The 'right' of property could be destroyed (through the use of dynamite)... A glorious free society inaugurated simply by making ourselves (the workers) masters of the use of dynamite, then declaring that we will make no further claims to ownership and deny every person's right to be owner of anything, and administer instant death by any and all means to any and every person who attempts to claim ownership of anything. This method and this alone can relieve the world of this infernal monster called the 'right of property'."¹³

9. Hillquit, 237.

10. Commons, II, 291.

11. David, 90 and 342.

12. "August Spies et al vs the People of the State of Illinois", Supreme Court of Illinois, Northern Grand Division, March Term A.D. 1887, Abstract of Record, (Chicago, 1887) (I-II), II, 49.

13. Ibid, I. 92.

Spies, the leader of the German section of the movement in Chicago, came from an entirely different background, one less likely to produce an Anarchist. A native of Germany, he left that country following the death of his father, who had been a forestry official in Baden. In 1872 at the age of seventeen he arrived in New York, where he remained for a year before moving to Chicago. By 1877 he was a member of both the Socialist Labor Party and the Lehr und Wehr Verein (Learn and Arm Society). Though his background had been against it--prior to his father's death the family had not known any actual hardship--Spies had taken to the literature of Socialism like a "duck to water".¹⁴ After standing for public office three times he too, as Parsons had, forsake hope in the efficacy of political action.¹⁵ This was evidence by his appearance as chairman of the Revolutionary Socialist Congress in Chicago in 1891,¹⁶ and re-enforced by his presence at the Pittsburgh Congress in 1893.

The Chicago sections possessed one individual who exceeded most in the fierceness of his language. This was Louis Lingg, but recently arrived in the United States from Switzerland.¹⁷ Born in Mannheim, Germany, he was forced to flee that country due to his membership in the Workingmen's Educational Society - then a prime target of the government's anti-Socialist sentiment.¹⁸

14. Spies, Autobiography, 24. His own words.

15. Ibid, 34; also Parsons, 49.

16. David, 69.

17. Dyer D. Lum, A Concise History of the Great Trial of the Chicago Anarchist (Chicago, 1897), 27.

18. Parsons, 36.

On arrival in America he went immediately to Chicago where he pursued his trade as a carpenter. This made it possible for him not only to earn a living but to secure election to the Chicago Central Labor Council as a delegate from the Carpenter's Union.¹⁹ Lingg was generally considered to be a member of the "lunatic fringe" of the movement, possibly due to his constant advocacy of an armed and trained proletariat. He was also believed to be a leader of the *Lehr und Wehr Verein* operating in Chicago in 1885-1886.²⁰

The last of the martyrs to the cause of Anarchism was Adolph Fischer. Little is known of this German born compositor beyond the fact that he first appeared in Chicago in 1883.²¹ In co-operation with George Engel he founded a short-lived publication, Anarchist in 1884, and alternately worked for the Arbeiter-Zeitung.²² Beyond writing an occasional article for the latter organ and editorializing for the Anarchist with Engel while that paper existed, Fischer seems to have played little part in the Anarchist movement in Chicago.²³ Certainly his role was not equal to that of Spies or Parsons.

19. Lum, 28.

20. Ibid. See also Charles Edward Russell "The Haymarket and Afterwards-Some Personal Recollections", Appleton's Magazine, Vol. X., No. 4 (October 1907) pp. 405-412.

21. Lum, 60.

22. "August Spies et al", II, 299-301.

23. Parsons, 275-279. Also Russell, 408. Note Fischer refusing an offer from the State made by Grinnell, State's Attorney, for immunity in return for turning State's evidence.

Chicago was in a state of turmoil in the spring of 1886. A large section of the city's labor force was unemployed and of the portion that was employed a considerable number were engaged in strike-breaking and the few working non-strike-breakers were eking out a bare subsistence wage. Add to this an active body of Anarchists urging the workers to take matters into their own hands and revolt, plus a police force intent on crushing any and all meetings of the strikers and the unemployed and all the necessary ingredients for a violent explosion are present.²⁴

The first indication of what was to become the Haymarket affair came on May 3. On that day a group of strikers were being addressed by August Spies, some distance from the McCormick Reaper Works, their former place of employment. As Spies was finishing his speech a whistle announced the changing of shifts at the McCormick Works and strike-breakers began to pour out of the plant. The strikers, in a mood for revenge over the loss of their jobs, ran toward the plant throwing rocks at the strike-breakers.²⁵ During this occurrence a police contingent arrived upon the scene and immediately opened fire upon the assailants. The result: two men killed, three women wounded, a small child killed and Spies galvanized into a burning rage. He immediately

24. Department of Labor of Illinois, Second Biennial Report, "Strikes in Chicago and Vicinity, (Chicago 1886), 4.
See also Russell op cit for the temper of the city as the first of May approached.

25. "August Spies et al", II, 297-300.

went to his office in the Arbeiter-Zeitung and composed the "Revenge Circular".²⁶

This widely circulated sheet was passed around at labor meetings held that same evening. The following evening a meeting was held, as advocated by the "Circular" in Haymarket Square to protest the brutality of the police. During the day, May 4th, the gathering was planned by delegates of the labor unions in Chicago. Spies was invited by Adolph Fischer to address the meeting on behalf of the International Working People's Association.²⁷

The evening of the Haymarket meeting brought signs of rain and the crowd that assembled was disappointingly small.²⁸ Spies in an endeavor to maintain interest (and perhaps increase the audience?) left the meeting and sought out Parsons who was speaking at a meeting at Des Plaines Street a short distance away.²⁹ Oscar Neebe, a trade unionist and Samuel Fielden, an English born teamster, agreed to keep the meeting open pending Spies return with Parsons.³⁰

26. Ibid. Part of the Circular read: "Good speakers will be present to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police, the shooting of our fellow-workmen yesterday afternoon. Spies ordered the line which was to follow--- "WORKINGMEN ARM YOURSELVES AND APPEAR IN FULL FORCE!"--- stricken out on the grounds that it "might have caused trouble between the police and the attendants of that meeting".

27. Ibid., 120-125.

28. Ibid., 116. Testimony of Paul Hull, a reporter who was present at the meeting.

29. Ibid., 300.

30. The Mayor of Chicago was present at the meeting at this same time and his testimony substantiates this. Ibid., 174.

While Fielden and Heebe were attempting to hold the gathering together, the Mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison, who was in attendance due to his fears of another McCormick incident, observed the meeting with a gradually dispelled trepidation.³¹ By ten minutes after ten he was sufficiently confident of the outcome to leave and remark to Captain Bonfield, at the nearest precinct station, that all was peaceful and that he could send his reserves home.³²

Despite this remark of the Mayor's, Captain Bonfield at twenty minutes past ten ordered a subordinate, Captain Ward, and a force of one hundred and eight men to disperse the meeting.³³ It is significant that the last of the police to fall out for this march to Haymarket Square had to double time to catch up with the main body.³⁴ On arrival at the Square, Captain Ward

31. In the election of 1888 Harper's Weekly congratulated Chicago on having removed the "Socialist" Carter Harrison from office. Harper's Weekly, XXXII, No. 1661 (Nov. 10, 1888).

32. "August Spies et al", II, 174. In this connection Oril Brown, "The Haymarket After Fifty Years", The Christian Century, LIII, No. 19 (May 6, 1936), 659-661, brings out an interesting point. He claims that prior to the Haymarket Affair "a thousand residents of West Madison Street had signed a petition demanding the dismissal of Captain Bonfield" and that a "similar request was made by the People's Gas Company". The reason, Brown claims, was "Bonfield's extreme brutality". No other source mentions this nor does any trace of it appear in the trial record.

33. Ibid, II, 1. Testimony of Captain Ward.

34. Ibid. Captain Black, defense counsel, brought this out in his examination of Captain Ward.

called upon the meeting to disperse and was answered by Fielden, an English born teamster, who was then addressing the meeting from the back of a wagon,

"We are peaceable".

Following this remark, Fielden and the others who were on the wagon started to descend to the street.³⁵

At this moment a glowing light caused by a sputtering fuse flew through the air and exploded between the second and third line of police.³⁶ As soon as the blast died away the police opened fire upon the crowd dissipating all but the wounded.³⁷ Eight police and one civilian lay dead as a result of the bomb and there were sixteen wounded from the fire of the police.³⁸

Following the Haymarket Riot as it came to be known, the police under the leadership of Captain Michael Schaack began a round-up of all known or suspected Anarchists.³⁹ Lingg, Spies, Fielden, Neebe, and Fischer were immediately arrested, but Parsons somehow managed to evade the dragnet. The five "Anarchists" together with Michael Schwab, an editorial associate of Spies

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid, II, 45.

37. Ibid, II, 267.

38. Lum, 33-34. There is no reference to the civilian dead in the court record.

39. Michael Schaack, Anarchy and Anarchists, (Chicago 1889), 58. Charles A. Siringo in Two Evil Isms. Pinkertonism and Anarchism, (Chicago, 1913) 114 charges that Schaack tried to keep the Anarchist issue alive for four years after the Riot with a view to self-glorification. Schaack's own work would make this highly credible.

and George Engel, co-founder of the short-lived Anarchist, were placed on trial for the murder of Police Officer Degan who had died as a result of wounds incurred in the blast.⁴⁰ Rudolph Schnaubelt who had been with Spies when the latter had gone to search for Parsons was arrested but released.⁴¹ As the grand jury introduced a hypothesis that Schnaubelt was the actual principal acting in accordance with a conspiracy in which the defense participated, the release of Schnaubelt was either a major error on the part of the police or a piece of major strategy upon the part of the prosecution. Schnaubelt was clever enough to see the handwriting on the wall and fled the country.⁴²

40. For some reason the indictment specifies only Degan as a victim of the bomb. "August Spies et al", I, I.

41. Ibid. Schnaubelt was indicted for the crime however.

42. The case against Schnaubelt is built up in the testimony of the two witnesses for the State, Gottfried Waller and Bernard Schrade. Ibid, 3-12. The controversy over who actually threw the bomb has never been settled. Many authors lean to the theory that it was Schnaubelt (among them Lum, Siringo, Schaack and Frank Harris, author of The Bomb, (New York, 1912) a fictionalized account of the incident). The most authoritative source in this instance is Emma Goldman, and her proof is of the negative variety. Following Harris' alleged evidence (which he quotes in the foreword to his book) she took the trouble to run down the story in Germany in 1922. She found Schnaubelt in Munich where he denied ever throwing the bomb, or claiming "credit" for it. Lucy R. Parsons was unconvinced however and was confident that Schnaubelt while possibly not the actual thrower of the bomb, was aware of who it was. Her husband was of the opinion that it was a police conspiracy--which view would be in line with his opinion of Schaack. Lum, 59; Siringo, 48; Goldman, II, 410; Parsons, 43; Schaack, 114; Harris, op cit. Schnaubelt would have certainly been subject to no criminal indictment in 1922 for an act of 1886.

Meanwhile all Anarchist publications in Chicago were suppressed, meetings were forbidden; records seized; mail confiscated; the Anarchist meeting places were searched and a general campaign of Anarchist extermination began.⁴³ All the leaders of the movement in Chicago were either in hiding or in jail.⁴⁴ Nor was the campaign of extermination limited to Chicago alone.

In New York, Most felt the hot breath of the police upon him and the New York section of the movement. On the 30th of April 1886, the New York Sun reported that the Grand Jury was studying Most's speech given at Germania Hall on the 23rd of the same month for evidence of "inciting to riot".⁴⁵ The Sun reported an alleged copy of the circular distributed to call attention to the meeting had contained the following:

"Let the people arm themselves before it is too late and before their oppressors have made it impossible for them to get arms".⁴⁶

On May 4th, the Sun declared that "Most Disappears" and the Grand Jury returned an indictment of "incitement to riot" against him based on his speech of April 23rd.⁴⁷

43. "August Spies, et al" II, 194. Also Schaack, 117.

44. Russell, 405. Note his comments on Schaack.

45. Sun April 30, 1886.

46. Sun April 23, 1886.

47. Sun, May 4, 1886. Unfortunately the records of this trial were burned in the fire which destroyed a large section of the records of the New York Law Library at Albany in 1904. Hence there is a reliance on such sources as the Sun, Harper's Weekly, et al, supplemented by Nold, Bauer, Havel and Goldman.

It was at this time that the "under the bed" incident occurred with which the periodicals of the time amused themselves. Most had not, it appears, left the city, but had merely changed addresses, one of the better means of becoming lost in a city the size of New York. According to the Sun

"Johann Most, the anarchist leader, was arrested today at 198 Allen Street, the home of Mrs. Augusta Fischer, keeper of a house of assignation. When the detectives arrived at the house they told Mrs. Fischer that they represented a wealthy man who wished to marry Mrs. Fischer's daughter, Lena, and asked to speak with the daughter. Mrs. Fischer consented to call the girl and asked her to come down from an upstairs room. When the daughter came out of the room she closed the door behind her, which made the detectives suspicious. They asked her who was in the room and she replied 'nobody'. The detectives rushed up the stairs and broke into the room. A cursory search revealed nothing, and the detectives were about to leave, when one of them lifted up the bedspread and looked beneath the bed. He dragged on a pair of shoes and Most came out from under the bed."⁴⁸

Most denied this story, but it was of no avail. Harper's Weekly picked it up and added insult to injury by running a cartoon entitled "New Style Drill For Anarchists", depicting a group of bearded men charging under beds.⁴⁹ The cartoon spelled humiliation for Most in capital letters for the wide circulation of the magazine spread it across the nation.

Although provided with a lawyer, Most elected to conduct his own defense. Charged with an "advocacy of arson and inciting to riot" he pleaded that his speech was in line with

⁴⁸. Sun, May 9, 1886.

⁴⁹. Harper's Weekly XXX, No. 1505, (May 22, 1886) 362.

the concept of free speech.⁵⁰ The Court found against him however and on the 2nd of June he began a sentence of a year at Blackwell's Island.⁵¹

This year was one of horror for Most. The scar which disfigured his face was revealed when he was shaved and the close-cropped prison hair cut pointed up the twisted face. What effect this had on Most's relations with his fellow prisoners is not revealed, but it is reasonable to presume that the officials of the prison were not too kindly disposed to the Anarchist leader. Most described the year on the Island as one of "horror and nightmare" in a later conversation with Emma Goldman.⁵²

The nightmare was not over with the sentence on Blackwell's Island. Indeed Most had barely begun his sentence when the Haymarket trial began on June 21, 1886.⁵³ In retrospect there might seem to be only a remote connection between Most and this trial. Yet to the Chicago press and the Cook County prosecutor there was a very real and very close connection. Mr. Ingham, special assistant to the State's Attorney, claimed that

"The leader of the Anarchists in America is John Most, and these men are his disciples. I know further as a fact of history that in 1880 at the Socialist convention in Switzerland, John Most was expelled for teaching the doctrines that these men advocate here".⁵⁴

50. Sun, May 29, 1886.

51. Sun, June 2, 1886.

52. Goldman, 64.

53. "August Spies et al", I, 1.

54. In the Supreme Court of the State of Illinois, Northern Grand Division, March Term A.D. 1887, August Spies et al vs the People of the State of Illinois, Brief on the Facts for Defendants in Error, (Chicago, 1887) 54. Mr. Ingham is slightly askew in his "fact". It was not the Socialists who were convened; it was the Social Democrats of Germany.

A further attempt was made by Mr. Ingham by the interjection of Revolutionnaire Kriegswissenschaft as evidence. Though Captain Black, the leading defense counsel, objected strongly to this as having

"no relevancy to this case"⁵⁵

the State maintained that the platform advanced by the defendants was identical with that of the book and that this book was sold at their meetings and picnics.⁵⁶ Therefore it was admissible under the statutes as evidence against them for the murder of Degan.⁵⁷

Succeeding in having the book admitted as relevant, Ingham went on to have Spies identify a postal card from Johann Most, though Spies claimed that he had never carried on a correspondence with Most.⁵⁸ The postal card read

"(L.S.) Dear Spies: I had scarcely mailed my letter yesterday when the telegraph brought news from H.M.(?) One does not know whether to rejoice over that or not. The advance in itself is heartening. Sad is the circumstance that it will remain local and therefore might not have a result. At any rate these people make a better impression than the foolish voters on this and the other side of the ocean. Greetings and a shake.

Yours J.M."⁵⁹

55. Ibid, 31.

56. "August Spies et al" II, 11. Testimony of Bernard Schrade who stated that the book was sold at Anarchist picnics at which the defendants were present.

57. Lum, 82.

58. "August Spies et al" II, 310. Testimony of Spies. Spies was vague in his identification of both the card and the letter which was later introduced. See later pages of this Chapter.

59. Ibid, II, 313.

Mr. Ingham again referred to Revolutionnaire Kriegwissenschaft during the course of the trial when he said

"It is in evidence and uncontradicted that the defendant Engel had a machine made which he could have for no other purpose than for the fusing of metal. There was no reason in the world why he should want to melt zinc lead, iron and I want to call attention to the fact that the book of Herr Most which was introduced in evidence describing minutely the making of poisons, nitro-glycerine, nitro-gelatin, dynamite, fulminating mercury and other explosives. It describes the making of three kinds of bombs, the gas-pipe, iron and zinc bomb."⁶⁰

Ingham also introduced a letter in evidence. This letter "had been taken from the Arbeiter-Zeitung office" by the police. A reading of the letter into the record was achieved by Ingham over the objections of the defense counsel.⁶¹ The letter was dated "N.Y. 1884" and read:

"Dear Spies: Are you sure that the letter from Hocking Valley was not written by a detective? In a week I will be going to Pittsburgh and I have an inclination to go also to Hocking Valley. For the present I send you some reading matter. There 'Sch.N.' also existed but on paper. I told you this some months ago. On the other hand I am in a condition to furnish 'medicine' and the genuine article at that. Directions for use are probably not needed by these people. Moreover they were recently published in the Fr!. The appliances I can also send. Now if you consider the address of Buchtell thoroughly reliable I will ship twenty or twenty-five pounds. But how? Don't forget to put yourself in communication with Drury in connection with the English organ. He

⁶⁰. This section of the book, Revolutionnaire Kriegwissenschaft is translated in "August Spies et al" I, 142-154 and denoted "Peoples Exhibit No. 16".

⁶¹. Ibid., II, 313-314.

will surely work with you much and well. Such a paper is more necessary than the Truth. This indeed is getting more miserable from issue to issue and in general is whistling from the last hole. Enclosed is a fly-leaf which recently appeared at Emden, and is perhaps adapted for re-print. Greetings to Schwab, Rau and you. Yours Johann Most. P.S. To Dachtell I will, of course, write only in general terms."62

There are several peculiar things about this letter. The first is the rather abstract date, "N.Y. 1884". The second is the salutation of the letter itself. Why does not Most, if he is the author, greet Spies as he did in the card? Why does he not refer to Spies as "L.S."? The style itself differs radically from that of the card, but this might be explained by the need for brevity in the latter medium.

But when one considers the content of the letter itself several questions come to mind, even to the casual observer. Why does Most, so poorly obscure the fact that he is talking about explosives? Even the quotes around the word 'medicine' give it away. Note the use of initials in the post card and the full names in the letter. Surely any internal security would have dictated that these measures be carried through all correspondence. A further point is that had Most and Spies been engaged in the shipment of explosives as the letter purports, then the machinery for the transmission from one to another would have been a matter for more than casual reference. If Most had "an inclination" to go to Hocking Valley, and certainly

62. Ibid, II, 312.

the letter indicates that Buchtell was in Hocking Valley at the time why does he not indicate a desire to check on the man there? Or if that were to be considered too dangerous then why not send an emissary from Pittsburgh? Spies would have certainly known about the instructions in Freiheit relative to the use of dynamite and other explosives, so mention of that seems rather needless. Why the phrase "greetings to Schwab, Rau and you"? The "P.S." seems totally unnecessary when one considers that the previous part of the letter has already indicated at least a dormant distrust of Buchtell. In summation when one considers that Most had the advantage of training in the smuggling of literature, had been in prison, by 1884, on four different occasions in Europe, and in general had a thorough grounding in revolutionary tactics, as regards sub-rosa operations, the letter seems out of focus with his general background.

Also in point here is the fact that Captain Schaeck made several trips to New York in an attempt to link Most with the Haymarket Riot. The attempt was a failure as Schaeck himself admitted.⁶³ Further, at the time when the Hocking Valley strike was being investigated there was no evidence that Anarchists had been involved in the strike.⁶⁴

Most's comrades in the movement in Chicago were found guilty in a trial that had few parallels in the history of American

63. Schaeck, 184.

64. Ohio State Legislature, Report of the Hocking Valley Investigating Committee, (Columbus, Ohio, 1884).

jurisprudence.⁶⁵ Spies, Fischer, Lingg, Engel and Parsons, who had turned himself over to the law mid-way through the first day of the trial, were sentenced to hang. Schwab and Fielden were also sentenced to hang but their sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on the day before the execution was scheduled to take place. Neebe received fifteen years in prison.⁶⁶ Lingg escaped the gallows by committing "suicide" under very suspicious circumstances.⁶⁷ The four, Spies, Fischer, Engel and Parsons were ^{hanged} ~~hung~~ in Chicago's Cook County Jail on November 11, 1887.⁶⁸

Most was freed in June of 1887 but it was only a temporary release. By the date of the execution of the Chicago "coorades" he was again making speeches in New York.⁶⁹ On the day following the execution he spoke in Kramer's Hall before a sympathetic audience.⁷⁰ It was this speech which brought him again before the New York Courts.

Arrested and brought to trial he elected to rely on counsel

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65. "August Spies et al" I and II. Note the actions of Judge Cary in relation to the objections raised by the defense counsel were almost negative and denying while those of the State met with almost universal favor.
66. David, op cit, Chapter XV, who also gives the press reaction to the verdict.
67. His cell had been searched only a half-hour before the "suicide" and he had no visitors in the interval. Schasack, 634-36.
68. David, Chapter XXI, shows the reaction of the four as they approached the gallows.
69. Goldman, 64.
70. "People v John Most" New York Reports, 128, Sickels, 83, (Albany, 1892) 108-109. Hereinafter referred to as "People vs John Most" 1887.

and secured the services of William F. Howe of Howe and Hummel. The charge was a "violation of the Penal Code, Section 451, Subdivision 3, Unlawful Assembly"⁷¹ Prosecution of this case was handled by Assistant District Attorney Mackenzie Semple, under William T. Jerome's direction.⁷²

The prosecution's handling of the case is illustrated by their charge to the jury to "discount the testimony of the witnesses who had replied in the negative to the question 'Do you believe in God?'" Since all of the witnesses for the defense were Anarchists, the entire testimony for the defense was cancelled by this charge. Semple based his case upon the testimony of two policemen and one reporter who had attended the meeting at Kramer's Hall on the evening of November 12, 1887. The reporter stated that Most had said

"Had I known the executioner I would never have rested until he shared their (Spies, Parsons, Engel and Fischer's) fate..."

"The day of revolution will soon come..."

"Arm yourselves and be ready..."

"We will have one hundred, five hundred, for every one they (the ruling class) murder..."

"I am an Anarchist and I am willing to die for the cause..."

"Rise Anarchy and long shall it live..."⁷³

The prosecution also attempted to introduce Most's book, the Revolutionnaire Kriegswissenschaft and failing of success in this respect asked Most some forty-eight questions which alluded

71. Ibid, 109.

72. Jerome was later to prosecute Howe, Most's attorney. See Robert Revere, The Keeper and the Blackmailer, (New York, 1949).

73. "People vs John Most", 1887, 112.

directly to the book.⁷⁴ Semple also claimed that Most was guilty of having

"given a diatribe against the judge (Joseph E. Cary who sat in the Haymarket trial) the Supreme Court of Illinois, (which had reviewed the case), the hangman, the governor of Illinois, the press and the suppressors of the meeting (at which Most had spoken)."⁷⁵

Lawyer Howe, in an attempt to counter this, brought forth ten witnesses, all of whom contradicted the prosecution's version of the meeting, and then placed Most on the stand. Most related that when a voice in the meeting had cried

"Why not today (Revolt)? For we are ready and prepared!"

he had replied

"The capitalists are still too eager for blood and (that) revolt now would only provoke a massacre."⁷⁶

Despite the contradictions of the prosecution witnesses, Most was found guilty and sentenced to a year on Blackwell's Island.⁷⁷ Howe immediately filed notice of appeal from the sentence and verdict and Most was released, pending appeal, on a bail of five thousand dollars.⁷⁸

Although Most was now facing his second imprisonment in five years he did not retreat from the movement which had been

74. Ibid, 112-114.

75. "People v John Most" Supreme Court, First Division, III, 335-336; the highest appeal of the case.

76. Ibid, 114-115.

77. Ibid. The sentence is not given in the trial record. For details on his final arrival at Blackwell's Island, see New York Times, June 20, 1891.

78. Goldman, 110.

the prime cause of his sentences. When the appeal went against him and he was finally sentenced in December of 1891, Goldman records him as

"marching out of the courtroom with his head held high, still the old warrior".⁷⁹

Also present at the trial was Justus Schwab. The two old compatriots did not speak.

What sort of treatment Most was accorded on his second visit to Blackwell's Island is not recorded. However shortly after his release he issued his famous "To the Proletariat", re-affirming his faith in class struggle.⁸⁰ This work probably one of the very few written in English by Most, shows his gift with the pen, perhaps better than any other. A few lines will suffice.

"As long as I have eyes to see the horrors of this world; as long as my ears can hear the groans of the proletariat; as long as my brain is alert in my head and can reflect the terrible impressions which are called forth by the injustices of every hour; as long as my heart has not become insensible to the sufferings of the disinherited, my mouth will not remain silent to the crimes which the rich and powerful commit against the people."⁸¹

79. Ibid.

80. There is no date on the actual publication of this work, though a close approximation may be secured by other sources, (Goldman, Rucker, et al.) would place it about May 1, 1890.

81. Johann Most, To the Proletariat (pamphlet) New York, (n.d.) (n.p.) p. 4.

CHAPTER III

HUMILIATION

Most began an association in the latter part of 1888¹ that was to develop into another public humiliation, almost as embarrassing as the "under the bed" incident. The death of the Haymarket group had brought to the movement Emma Goldman, a Russian Jewess. Miss Goldman left her home and family in Rochester, New York to join the Anarchist section in New York City.² Most adopted the young girl as his protege and arranged for her to give a series of lectures through New York and Ohio, depicting the folly of the eight-hour movement.

Miss Goldman learned the knack of arousing people from Most, but she resented his constant urging of his own views of Anarchism upon her. When she returned from the lecture tour she told him that she was merely being a "parrot" and that her own ideas of Anarchism were being suppressed.³ The criticism enraged Most and he turned upon her and her friend and companion, Alexander

1. The date is, at best, conjecture. Miss Goldman, with typical femininity, is very sparing of dates in her work. Most, for reasons that will be apparent, does not mention it at all and Berkman recalls only his own meeting with Most, in his Prison Memoirs of An Anarchist (New York, 1912).

2. Goldman, 23, and 26.

3. Ibid, 51. She spoke, incidentally, in Rochester where her former employer was engaged in a strike, on the subject of the strike.

Berkman, a recent immigrant from Russia.⁴ Whether Most indicted Berkman because of his affinity with Goldman or because of his criticism is not clear. It was perhaps a little of both. Regardless of the reason, the rift between protege and teacher, was complete when Miss Goldman began reading Autonomie, the London publication of Joseph Peukert,⁵

The quarrel between Most and Peukert was one of long standing. The genesis of it was the arrest of Johann Neve, one of the German Anarchists, who smuggled Most's London printed Freiheit into Germany in 1880-1881. Neve had operated along the German-Belgian border with impunity for two years smuggling Anarchist literature into Germany, when Peukert accompanied by a "friend" visited him in 1881. One week later Neve was arrested. The companion of Peukert was later proved to be a police spy and the Anarchist movement in Europe denounced Peukert as having played the traitor. Whether this was the case, or whether it was an act of gross stupidity on Peukert's part, history has not yet revealed. For Most however the decision had been made; Peukert had betrayed not only a comrade but a friend of long standing.⁶ Peter Kropotkin never a man to hold a grudge is said to have told Peukert

"For a man guilty of such stupidity there is only one thing to do---disappear from the movement."⁷

4. Berkman, 59.

5. Goldman, 54.

6. The best account of this episode in the history of the Anarchist movement is in Max (Podalsky) Nomad, Apostles of Revolution, 284-285. Most and Neve had been friends in Germany.

7. Nomad, quoting Kropotkin's Memoirs of A Revolutionist, (Boston, 1899).

Yet Peukert must have had hopes of eventual forgiveness for he tried to remain in the Party.

Emma Goldman attempted to resolve the conflict between the two men by proposing that the matter be brought up for a thorough investigation by the National Conference of Yiddish Anarchists.⁸

If by this investigation Miss Goldman hoped to resolve the conflict she chose the wrong person for the introduction of her proposal. She asked her friend and companion, Alexander Berkman, to present the motion for investigation on the floor of this Conference. Most regarded Berkman as an ally of Peukert, due to his association with that group. He felt that this cast doubt on the integrity of himself and the others who had originally denounced Peukert as a spy and refused to participate in the hearing.⁹ Miss Goldman, after hearing that Most was impugning the motives of the investigating group, went to his office to plead for the fairness of the hearing. He turned over to her the data that he possessed on l'affaire Peukert.¹⁰ How much personality colored the attitude of Most is not clear, but certainly Miss Goldman's claim that he had now become a "traitor and a coward" does not seem valid. Her impartiality, in this aspect of her relationship with Most, would seem to

8. Goldman, p. 74. Goldman gives the date as being December of 1890, but beyond this there seems to be no other date or reference.

9. Peukert was, at this time, in London, but several of his adherents had emigrated to New York, Goldman, 76-77.

10. Ibid. Shortly after this Conference, the presence of Peukert is noticed in the New York press. New York Times, February 10, 1891.

have been colored by his simultaneous announcement of a forthcoming marriage to Helen Minkin, a friend of Miss Goldman's,¹¹ after he had stressed his opposition to marriage in talks with her.¹²

Most had evidently changed his attitude toward marriage for he announced his desire on the basis of a "need for a home and children."¹³ If this was his real object in the marriage he was rudely interrupted in the pursuit of the ideal by the adverse decision of the New York Supreme Court on his appeal from the trial verdict of 1887. On June 20, 1890 he was remanded to Blackwell's Island to begin the one year sentence imposed by the original court decision.¹⁴

On April 20, 1891, Most was released and immediately resumed editorship of Freiheit and within a short time was again speaking at Anarchist rallies.¹⁵ He was, however, a little more cautious in his speeches. Whether this was a result of his latest term at Blackwell's Island or the effect of the passage of years -- he was now forty-four -- or the added responsibility of a family is not clear. There is no record of any trial of Most in the years 1890-1901.

11. For examples of Miss Goldman's interest in Most, see Goldman, 44; 64; 72; 77 and 379.

12. "There is no such a thing as love there is only sex". Ibid, 72.

13. Ibid, 77.

14. New York Times, June 20, 1890.

15. Times, April 20, 1891.

In 1892 came the attentat of Alexander Berkman. The young immigrant attempted to kill Henry C. Frick, manager of the Homestead Works of the Carnegie Steel Company.¹⁶ The Homestead Works had been the scene of a bloody struggle between labor and capital with public opinion running almost universally against the company.¹⁷ The eviction of workers families from company houses was decried by the press almost without exception.

When Berkman attempted to assassinate Frick, in retaliation for the dead on labor's side of the struggle, public opinion quickly reversed itself.¹⁸ The attack on Frick accomplished what Frick had not been able to accomplish. Berkman's act was attributed to labor agitators and a shift in the attitude of the public occurred almost overnight.¹⁹

Most's first reaction was that the attack had been made

"by one of Frick's own men to inspire sympathy for him. Frick knows that public opinion is turning against him and he needs something to turn the tide in his favor."²⁰

16. Berkman, 124, passim, has a good picture of the deed from the standpoint of the intended killer.

17. See, for example, the reaction in the Montana press prior to July 12, 1892. As for instance, Butte Miner, et al. The Company received a good press in Pittsburgh and most Pennsylvania cities (see, Pittsburgh Press, Philadelphia Press prior to July 12, 1892) but otherwise the press had condemned the eviction cited below as "inhumane and heartless".

18. Even the periodicals joined in this. See Harper's Weekly any issue prior to July 12, 1892. Then note the switch in opinion in the second issue in July which came out after the attentat.

19. Press editorials show this more clearly than the news stories themselves. New York Times, July 13, 1892 and New York Sun, same date.

20. Goldman, 97, quoting a speech of Most's before the German Anarchist Local No. 1, in New York City, on July 23, 1892.

Miss Goldman, who had aided Berkman in his preparation for the deed, knew that the "Bergman" referred to by the press was Berkman, and felt that in view of the fact that Most had been asked for aid in this act that he was also cognizant of the identity of the assailant.²¹ She felt that Most should recognize this deed and publicize it through the medium of Freiheit. Disappointed in this, she denounced Most in the hall of a German Anarchist local and continued the attack in the paper Anarchist. She claimed that Most had been either drunk or afraid of the detectives in the hall of the German local, and thus failed to publicize Berkman's deed. Most attacked the attentat of Berkman claiming he had "shot off a toy pistol"²² and denounced the arrest of Carl Nold and Otto Bauer, Pittsburgh Anarchists²³ who were arrested as accomplices of Berkman.²⁴ Most claimed that the latter two had "mistrusted Berkman from the first".²⁵ There was a sharp exchange of editorials between Anarchist and Freiheit. Berkman's act was eulogized in Anarchist and depreciated in

21. "Bergman" is the identity given to Berkman by most of the press. For the consultation of Most prior to the deed, see Goldman, 89, passim.

22. Goldman, 97.

23. Ibid. Both Nold and Bauer were later to write articles eulogizing Most in the Anarchist periodical Man. Man, April 1934 and May, 1935.

24. Ibid. Both men received prison sentences, however. Nold for fourteen months and Bauer for eighteen months. Berkman, 129-133.

25. Goldman, Ibid who claims that Berkman had merely stayed at the house of Nold a few moments before going to a hotel. It seems reasonably certain that neither Nold nor Bauer were aware of the purpose of Berkman in Pittsburgh.

Freiheit: Goldman gave speeches honoring Berkman, and Most replied with addresses belittling the attentat.²⁶

Immediately following this portion of the feud came Most's editorial in Freiheit, "Attentats-Reflexionen" ("Reflections on Propaganda of the Deed") a volte-face of his previous position on violence.²⁷ Whether this was dictated by expediency--the police were attempting to link Most with the deed of Berkman²⁸ as charged by Goldman,²⁹ or whether he felt that attentats would give the reactionaries an opportunity to initiate agitation against all foreigners as interpreted by Rudolph Rook,³⁰ is not known. However to Goldman it was sufficient that he had renounced the deed of Berkman to brand him as a "backslider and a coward".³¹ She "resolved to challenge him publicly".³² Goldman wrote an editorial in Anarchist branding Most a coward.³³ There

26. Unfortunately the sources for this feud are slightly biased. Miss Goldman is writing her autobiography, and this work should be balanced against the work of Rucker, op cit, with the added advantage of Nomad, Apostles of Revolution, to give a fairly accurate picture of the feud. Rucker, 353-356; Goldman, 97-106; Nomad, op cit, 206-207. For Berkman's reaction see Berkman, op cit, 205-210.

27. This was later reprinted as a pamphlet, and was partly translated by Nomad, 206-207.

28. He was arrested at the time of the deed, but was later released. Sun, July 25, 1892.

29. Goldman, 103.

30. Rudolph Rucker, personal letter to the present writer, dated April 22, 1950.

31. Goldman, Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

was no reply in Freiheit.⁵⁴

Miss Goldman "bought a horsewhip". At Most's next lecture

"the ill feeling which has existed between John Most, the conservative (sic!) leader of the Anarchists and Emma Goldman, who drinks beer in Anarchist's Peukert's saloon in Fifth Street, developed into an assault by that woman upon Most on Sunday evening (December 18, 1892) at 98 Forsyth Street where Most was addressing a meeting of Anarchists. No sooner had Most been introduced to the assembly than Emma Goldman, who had acquired notoriety as the champion of Berkman, the would-be killer of Frick, stepped forward, whip in hand, and administered a lash accompanied by select Anarchist billingsgate epithets. Most's friends seized her and hustled her out of the hall and the lecture proceeded".³⁵

54. Ibid. Once he had issued his statement of position on the issue Most seems to have remained aloof from the personalities involved.

55. This account must be weighed in the light of the press of the time.

New York Times, December 20, 1892.

Miss Goldman's account of the incident differs in some detail:

"At Most's next lecture I sat in the first row, close to the low platform. My hand was on the whip under my long grey cloak. When he got up and faced the audience I rose and declared in a loud voice: 'I came to demand proof of your insinuations against Alexander Berkman!' There was an instant silence. Most mumbled something about 'hysterical woman', but said nothing else. I then pulled out my whip and leaped towards him. Repeatedly I lashed him across the face and neck and then broke the whip across my knee and throw the pieces at him. It was all done so quickly that no one had time to interfere.

Then I felt myself roughly pulled back. 'Throw her out!' 'Beat her up!', people yelled. I was surrounded by an enraged mob and might have fared badly had not Claus (Timmerman?) and other friends come to the rescue. They lifted me up bodily and forced their way out of the hall." Goldman, 105-106.

There was some justification for Most's attitude in the dispute over the attentat of Berkman. As Most pointed out, had the attack on Frick been made by one of Frick's own workers it would have been understood by everyone.³⁶ But Berkman was an alien in the country and could not even speak the language.³⁷ His committing the crime gave impetus to the "reactionary" forces to institute a campaign of Anarchist man-hunts.³⁸ His view of the editor of Freiheit would seem to be bolstered by Berkman's own book The Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist, when he recounts a conversation with one of the strike leaders while awaiting trial. When he broached the subject of his attack on Frick the strike leader declared

"What the hell are you messing around in our business for? It is no concern of yours-- besides you have harmed us more than you have helped us".³⁹

The rift between Most and the younger members of the Anarchist movement as represented by Miss Goldman was now complete. He was on his way to a position of lesser and lesser influence

36. Rudolph Rucker, personal letter to the present writer dated April 22, 1950.

37. Berkman, 65, recounts that he had to have an interpreter for his trial.

38. An Anarchist round-up was held by the police in New York City at the time of the deed and it was this dragnet that brought Most to jail on July 25, 1892. New York Sun, July 25, 1892.

39. Berkman, 63

within the movement. Despite this, Most could still write a bitter editorial criticizing the courts of Pennsylvania for sentencing the young Berkman to twenty-two years for an act that had failed. This did not serve to mitigate the ire of Miss Goldman. She still held him more responsible for the sentence than she did the judge in the case.⁴⁰

Two years after the attack on Most by Goldman came relief from the assaults of the younger section of the movement. A group of German trades-unionists in Buffalo, New York, hoping to capitalize on Most's vigorous style of writing and his personal following invited him to edit their paper.⁴¹ Most accepted their offer and went to Buffalo where he performed the task of editing a daily paper with only one assistant. After four years of this he quarreled with his employers who demanded that he modify his style of writing and refrain from the advocacy of certain causes. Most thought this impossible and in 1898 returned to New York.⁴²

This was probably the most fortunate move that Most ever made. Had he remained in Buffalo he would, undoubtedly, have been connected with the assassination of McKinley by Czolgosz at the Buffalo Exposition in 1901. Even in New York he was to receive a prison sentence for advocating ideas similar to those which prompted Czolgosz.

40. Goldman, 109.

41. Memad, op cit, 297.

42. Ibid. The causes were not mentioned.

CHAPTER IV
THE LAST YEARS

In September, 1901 Most attended a picnic given by one of the Anarchist groups of New York City.¹ Perhaps as a result of this interruption of his editorial duties the article "Mord contra Mord" (Murder versus Murder) appeared in Freiheit the day following the assassination of President McKinley in Buffalo.²

In any event

"Johann Most, the leading spirit of the Anarchist movement in New York City was arrested in a saloon at 89 Gold Street at 6:30 last evening (September 13, 1901). He called for another drink before leaving the saloon, though he did not invite the detectives (or the reporter?)³ to have one. His article, published in Freiheit, the day after McKinley's assassination was claimed by Most to have been authored originally by Carl Heinzen in Boston."⁴

A week earlier Most had

"denied that Czolgosz was an Anarchist. 'The assassin of Harrison? Was he an Anarchist? No. This Czolgosz is unknown to anyone in the movement. He is probably a crank as Guiteau (the assassin of Harrison) was.'...⁵

1. New York Sun, September 14, 1901. Most's statement to the press.
2. Rocker, 401.
3. He added to this insult, apparently felt by the reporter of this incident, by calling the Chief of Police "a pig", while awaiting trial. Sun, September 15, 1901.
4. Sun, September 14, 1901.
5. Sun, September 8, 1901.

and

"In Schwab's saloon Most blamed the New York Journal for the assassination of McKinley."⁶

Following his arrest, Most was given a hearing before William H. Olmsted, City Magistrate and granted bail after a plea of "not guilty" to a charge of "violating Section 675 of the Penal Code of the State of New York" in that

"he wrongfully and willfully printed and published on the seventh of September, 1901, this article which disturbs the public peace and outrages the public decency."⁸

The District Attorney had asked for a bail to be set at twenty-five hundred dollars but the Magistrate set it at one thousand dollars saying:

"Herr Most will be here knowing his great love for notoriety."⁹

The arrest was a result of the feeling that the act of Czolgosz had been influenced by the teachings of Most and Miss

6. Ibid. The Journal at the time was controlled by William Randolph Hearst and it had come in for some heavy censure by other papers for its attacks on President McKinley. The Sun as a competitor of the Journal did not lag behind in this condemnation. Ibid; see, also, the New York Times of September 9, and 10, 1901.

7. New York State Court of Appeals, Elmira III, Part II, Case II, "People of the State of New York v John Most" (New York, 1902), 3. Hereinafter cited as "People v John Most", 1902.

8. Ibid, 4.

9. Sun, September 18, 1901.

Goldman,¹⁰ plus the unfortunate fact that Most's Freiheit -- containing the article "Murder versus Murder" appeared on the day following the shooting of McKinley. When he received news of the deed of Czolgosz Most claimed that he

"had attempted to withdraw the paper from circulation, fearing that it might be taken wrong."¹¹

He was unsuccessful in this, however, for a copy of the issue was purchased by a detective, one Joseph Krutch, from the International Publishing Company which distributed Freiheit.¹²

A translation was immediately begun by another detective on the New York police force. This translation, if we are to judge by the interval between the purchase and arrest must have been a difficult job, for it consumed nine days.¹³

Most had married Helen Minkin in 1891 and from this union had come two children, the eldest being eight at the time of the Most's 1901 trial.¹⁴ The influence of the family may seem

10. The press was full of "accounts" of the connection between Goldman, Most and Czolgosz. See, for example, the New York Sun, September 8, 1901 through September 20, 1901.

11. "People v John Most", 1902, 23.

12. Ibid, 4.

13. Ibid. Most incidentally, denounced the translation as being "clumsy", Sun, September 19, 1901. A possible reason for this denunciation is apparent in later pages of this Chapter.

14. There appears to be no record of this marriage in the records of the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the City of New York, though this does not rule out the marriage. Goldman, 79, states that Miss Minkin had gone back to New York (from New Haven) to marry Most. An attempt to trace the children of this union ended in their withdrawal from school in New York in March of 1906. Since this date is roughly coincident with Most's death it is assumed that the widow and children either left the city following his demise or that funds were insufficient to maintain them in school.

insignificant historically, yet it would appear that Most regarded it as sufficient reason for staying clear of situations that would bring him into conflict with the law. His situation, never too good, financially, was desperate even before the trial. He tried to support his family on the proceeds of Freiheit augmented by sporadic lecture tours.¹⁵ He was too well known to secure employment outside of Anarchist circles and even the lecture dates provided little beyond the "your expenses plus donation" type of remuneration. At the time of his arrest, Most gave his address as 378 13th Street in Brooklyn, certainly not one of the more prosperous residential districts.¹⁶ Certainly it had a bearing on Most's decision to base his whole defense on the contention that he had merely reprinted the article as originally written by Heinzen.¹⁷

A translation of the article appears in the trial record as Exhibit One. A few sentences will suffice to illustrate the points of contention between plaintiff and defendant:

"The best means of historical development has been murder. One half of the world's history has been a murder history. (Here follows a lengthy comparison of animal murder to human murder which is not pertinent to the trial.) Reaction has only tools and revelation has the martyrs... The victor is always right...(Cases cited where murder has been applauded - Brutus et al). Let murder be our study and dynamite our instrument. .. Murder is a necessity as a means of defense. Revolution is a defense against attackers..."¹⁸

15. One of these tours carried him to San Francisco in 1899 where he spoke at Metropolitan Hall to an audience of "several hundred" and "did not lack for applause". San Francisco Call, December 21, 1899.

16. "People v John Most", 1902, 2.

17. Ibid, 17

18. Ibid, 23.

Most admitted the publication of the article but claimed that he had attempted to withdraw the issue (from circulation) when he had been informed of the death of McKinley. He further claimed that

"the article had been written by Karl Heinzen fifty years ago and that over fifteen years ago I had re-printed the work and that it has been carried by most of the libraries of the nation. It had been first published by the Pioneer in Boston and that I republished it in Freiheit on March 14, 1885."¹⁹

Following Most's appearance upon the stand his lawyer-- Morris Hillquit moved for a dismissal.²⁰ The Court however elected to take the case under advisement over the week-end--- it then being Friday---and announced that they would give a decision on the fourteenth of October. On that date the Court speaking through Justice Hinsdale stated, in convicting him:

"Anarchy certainly agitates against the public decency and commits an outrage on the public peace... (Herein are cited various crimes committed by words or actions by Anarchists.) Crimes are committed by words or actions and as such they can be punished. (Hinsdale cites the crime of Czolgosz and the (implied) crime of Emma Goldman---Czolgosz must die for his crime while Goldman remains free.) There is a necessity for punishment of teachers of Anarchy. It would be well if no Anarchist were allowed to breathe the free air of America."²¹

Hillquit appealed to Justice C. F. MacLean of the Superior Court for a Certificate of Reasonable Doubt, the next necessary step in the appeal process of New York State at that time.²²

19. Ibid, 17-18.

20. Ibid, 24.

21. Ibid, 25-26.

22. Ibid, 30. For the procedure of the appeal process in New York State at the time I am indebted to Mr. Louis Cohen of the New York Law Library at Albany, New York.

Justice MacLean took an almost directly opposite view in his issuance of the Certificate:

"While the defendant may be guilty of plagiarism and while this may be regarded as a moral offense, it is not the duty of the Court to pass upon this. There exists no circumstances attending the act which would show any danger to the public peace or health. Nor is there any outrage against decency or morality. This article is a diatribe against three individuals all of whom are long since dead. The conviction for such publication seems to operate against the freedom of the press."²³

This opinion favorable as it was to Most was not sustained by the highest Court in the State. The opinion of this body, written by Justice George B. MacLaughlin was issued on the 11th of April, 1902 and stated that the article

"is an implied advisement to murder; a resort to force by advocacy. There is no right to advise murder or to advocate it. In the article it was definitely advocated by the phrase 'as Heinzen said--this is true even today'. Nor is the claim of reprinting valid. The use of the word dynamite negates this claim. Dynamite was not invented until after 1850, the original date of publication, consequently the claim of the defense that the charge should be one of 'plagiarism' is untenable."²⁴

Most was back on Blackwell's Island on April 18, 1902, for the third time to serve the sentence of one year imposed by the court. He continued to write articles for Freiheit, signing

^{23.} Ibid. The individuals that Heinzen had in mind can only be conjectured. It seems reasonable to assume, however, that they were Czar of Russia, Alexander II (later assassinated by the Nihilists); the Emperor of Prussia and the third would appear to have been either Emperor Franz Josef of Austria or Schwarzenburg. Heinzen does not mention any individual as a candidate for the practice of murder in the abstract of the article that appears in the trial record. "People v John Most", 1902, 7-14.

^{24.} Ibid., 34.

them "Alsaverus" so that the smuggling of the articles from the prison would not be detected. These articles were duly carried in Freiheit and featured in a prominent position.²⁵

Some time during the year of his imprisonment Most caused to be published a pamphlet entitled Down With The Anarchists in response to President Roosevelt's message to the Congress. Roosevelt had bitterly attacked the Anarchists in his first message to Congress. On December 3, 1901, the President wrote that:

"I earnestly recommend to the Congress that in the exercise of its wise discretion it should take into consideration the coming to this country of Anarchists or persons professing principles hostile to all government and justifying murder of those placed in authority. They and those like them (the group which gathered to glorify the murder of King Humbert of Italy) should be kept out of this country; and if found here should be promptly returned to the country whence they came; and far-reaching provisions should be made for the punishment of those who stay. No matter calls more urgently for the wisest thought of Congress."²⁶

If there was any doubt in the minds of the Anarchists as to the position of Congress, it was speedily removed. Within one week after the President had sent his message to Congress no less than fourteen bills were introduced into the Senate, each having as their object the exclusion of Anarchists from the country or the punishment of persons committing crimes against the persons of government officials.²⁷ The one law

25. Monad, Apostles of Revolution, 289.

26. Fifty-seventh Congress, (First Session), Congressional Record, XXXV, (Washington, 1902-1903), 81-82.

27. Senate Reports, 57th Congress, (Special Session), particularly No. 516; "To Accompany S-3317, An Act To Punish Offenses Against the Government of the United States".

which stands as a result of Roosevelt's message and McKinley's assassination is the Immigration Law of 1903 which excludes Anarchists from entry into the United States.²⁸

In Most's pamphlet an attempt to answer Roosevelt using the writings of Carlo Cafiero, Errico Malatesta, and E. Steinle.²⁹ The speeches of August Spies and Jean Grave before their respective courts were also included.³⁰

Just how this pamphlet was published and the circumstances surrounding Most's contributions to it are not known. He may have smuggled the material from Blackwell's Island as he had the articles signed "Ansverous" or he may have written it following this release. Since there is no date of publication on this pamphlet the date of Most's writing can only be surmised. The content is illuminating, however, as it gives Most's con-

28. The first person to fall under the ban of this act was John Turner, an English Anarchist, who was arrested, while making a speech at Lyceum Hall, in New York, May 8, 1903. For details on this case, see William C. Van Vleck, The Administrative Control of Aliens, (New York, 1932), 9-15.

29. Carlo Cafiero had been associated with Errico Malatesta in the comic-opera revolt of 1877, in Italy. Cafiero broke with Malatesta and the movement in 1898, for reasons never explained by him. Malatesta had been in the United States two years previous to the shooting of President McKinley, and had himself been shot by a member of the Italian group while addressing a meeting in Paterson, New Jersey. Max Nomad, Rebels and Renegades (New York, 1939) 40, *passim*, also Goldman, 403-404. Steinle was an artist in the French Anarchist movement and is apparently lost in the history of that branch of the movement.

30. Spies is the Spies of Haymarket fame. Jean Grave, a French Anarchist, was tried for the attempt to arouse resentment against the police in the dispersal of a strike crowd in Paris, in 1896. Unlike Spies, Grave lived to a ripe eighty-four. Nomad, Rebels and Renegades, 240. See also Moses Harman, The Persecution and the Appreciation, (n.p.) 1907, wherein Harman compares his trial, for a similar offense, with Grave's.

ception of Anarchy at the time.

"Take a bird's-eye view of Anarchistic society and you will note the following characteristic features:

Government has neither place nor purpose.

The community as a political body is also superfluous.

All of man's wants are met by associations or groups.

These are no longer centralized, and are only co-operative with one another as is necessary for the end sought.

Private property is no more.

All means of production are under the control of various trade organizations.

"Honest dickerin'" and its coadjutor, money, as known today have been removed.

Art and science like production are advanced through the adjustment of competent minds.

Educational interests are most carefully guarded and everybody (is) put in a position to appreciate (share) the results of scientific research.

Man's mind thus ever expanding discards superstition; religion, old and new has forever passed away.

Woman's sovereignty of self as well as that of the other sex is assured.

Instead of legislation there is the decision from one case to the next. None are governed; all are members of numerous corporations which one joins according to his own judgement and none need act against his own inclination.

Remember this is Anarchy....."31

Most was released in 1903 and again faced the problem of making the financial ends meet. Freiheit had dwindled in the matter of circulation, and was dying a slow death. Many of Most's former followers had gone "underground" as a result of the hysteria engendered by the act of Czolgosz.³² Those who remained contributed little to the paper operationally or financially.

31. Johann Most, Down With The Anarchists, (pamphlet) (New York, 1902?). This pamphlet was published by the Freedom Press of New York which ceased operations shortly after 1903.

32. Typical of this was the action of Emma Goldman, who changed her name and became a manager of a Russian theatrical group, and a practical nurse, during this period. Goldman, 315-380.

The Freiheit editor again took to the lecture platform in an effort to revive both the paper and his own fortunes. This, the next to last ~~tour~~^{two,} of Most's, took the greater time and was most extensive. He spoke from coast to coast and was not hesitant in giving his views.³³ At Simpson Hall in San Francisco he displayed some of his earlier fire in declaring

"Capitalists commit murder by day, because men are cheap.. One fine day there will be an army of proletarians in the field with red flags and the tyrants will be swept from the face of the globe... To hell with priests, capitalists, and politicians... We want the earth which we have cultivated..."³⁴

In spite of his efforts Freiheit continued to remain in the depths of financial and circulation malnutrition. It was Most's supreme desire to keep the paper alive. He may have felt it to be the last link with the movement--a movement that had virtually deserted him for the younger members.³⁵ Age was creeping up on the one-time "Father of American Anarchy" - he was fifty-eight in 1904---and ill a good part of the time.³⁶

33. In Chicago he was "severely heckled while speaking", Chicago Tribune, November 18, 1903.

34. Press report of his speech in San Francisco. San Francisco Call, December 22, 1903.

35. Some of the older members, of course, had died. Among them was Justus Schwab, who succumbed to tuberculosis in 1902. Goldman, 302. The breach between Most and Schwab over the arson charges by Tucker was never healed, apparently. Relative to the forsaking of Most by some members of the movement, note Max Baginsky stating to Emma Goldman that while he "greatly admired Most", that "Most was out of touch with the inspiration and impetus that came from the life and struggle of the masses". "Most's attack on Berkman had alienated the Chicago group." Goldman, 217.

36. It was possibly this that caused Bebel to refer to him as a "drunkard". August Bebel, My Life, (Chicago, 1912) 236. Bebel had known Most in Germany at the time of his release from Plötzensee prison.

The years of prison had taken their toll and he was no longer the robust individual that had stepped ashore in New York in 1882.

Most had one last triumph. Strangely enough this was to come from the medium to which he had aspired so unsuccessfully in his youth. In 1904 as Baumert in Hauptmann's play The Weavers,³⁷ he gave a performance that moved his arch-enemy Emma Goldman to write

"His interpretation of Baumert was a superb piece of acting that brought to memory all that he had told me of an early yearning for the theatre. How different his life might have been had he been able to satisfy that craving. Recognition and glory instead of hatred and persecution and prison... He accepted my praise in the same manner that he did scores of others who crowded around him."³⁸

His voice failing and in general ill-health Most still attempted to continue lecturing. On April 10, 1905, he gave a halting address at New Pennsylvania Hall before a "mass meeting of Socialists" in Philadelphia, declaring that

"We Anarchists welcome the Russian revolutionary movement as it promises to show us the way to overthrow every kind of a king. We American Anarchists think it will teach us to do away with our own kings, the Morgans, the Rockefellers and the others."³⁹

37. Goldman, 380. Baumert is the leader of the group of weavers in their revolt against oppression. Bruno Hauptmann, The Weavers, (translated by S. T. Wells), (New York, 1925).

38. Goldman, Ibid.

39. "When he began to speak it was evident that his once far-reaching voice was gone". Philadelphia Press, April 10, 1905.

In March, 1906, Most began another lecture tour in an attempt to revive the failing Freiheit. Though not so extensive as the tour in 1902, it was, nevertheless, a rigorous schedule, starting at Paterson, New Jersey, and winding through Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Columbus and Cincinnati, with the final lecture to be given in Chicago.⁴⁰

The tour went better both financially and in point of attendance than the earlier venture in 1903. The crowds in Paterson were enthusiastic over the appearance of the German Anarchist in the heart of the Latin section. Many of the men ^{who} ~~that~~ were later to become prominent in the Italian section of the movement attended his lecture on the "State and Property" which he gave on March 5th.

Though not as enthusiastic the crowd was at least as numerous in Philadelphia and Most was "extremely heartened" at the turn out.⁴¹ Much of the credit for this crowd can be attributed to the influence of Voltairine deCloyre who was then residing in Philadelphia. Miss deCloyre, while holding no brief for Most, was of the opinion that no matter who the speaker, "if he spoke for Anarchy that was enough for me".⁴²

40. Nold, op cit.

41. Howard, Apostles of Revolution, 282.

42. Miss deCloyre, like Emma Goldman, had been converted to Anarchy by the death of the Haymarket group. At the time of Most's speech in Philadelphia she was attempting to arouse a section of the movement, in that city, sufficiently to warrant publication of an Anarchist paper there. Voltairine de Cloyre, Selected Works of Voltairine deCloyre, New York, 1914, 8-14.

Carl Hold and Otto Bauer, the two comrades who had been arrested for complicity in Berkman's attentat, arranged a two day appearance for Most in Pittsburgh. Most spoke on the "Beast of Property" and the topic "Man and God", the latter being one of his favorite items. He was

"in rare form ascending the heights of logic as easily as he reached the depths of emotion".⁴³

Unfortunately the night of the last lecture it rained and the crowd was not as large as the speaker had expected. Coming from the hall, Most was drenched in a chilling downpour.⁴⁴ He insisted on continuing the tour however, and left Pittsburgh for Columbus, but on arrival was unable to do more than deliver a few halting, apologetic remarks. By the time he arrived in Cincinnati he was desperately ill, suffering from erysipelas.⁴⁵

A friend in the movement, Adolph Krause, took Most to his home and began a nursing vigil that was to end five days later. During the first few days he showed signs of recovering, then suddenly on March 17, 1906, he went into a decline and died shortly before noon. Erysipelas had induced a heart failure.⁴⁶

The movement for which Johann Most had given his life did not die with him, however. It was continued by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, both advocates of "propaganda by deed". Their deportation to Russia, in 1920, made virtually extinct "direct action" Anarchism in the United States. It had never completely recovered from Most's renunciation of 1902.

⁴³. Hold, Ibid.

⁴⁴. Cincinnati Enquirer, March 13, 1906.

⁴⁵. Enquirer, March 17, 1906.

⁴⁶. Ibid.

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